TITLE: TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN AND THEIR RECEPTION IN BRITAIN, 1760-1800

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary

This thesis attempts to consider all important translations of a literary character from the German in the period. It suggests that these were far more important in establishing the principles and popularising the mood of neo-Classicism in Britain than in conveying any Gothic themes. It gives reasons for the failure of the Sturm und Drang to make much impact on British writing. The limits of the thesis are chosen to emphasise the unity of this period of translation. This has been distorted by earlier emphasis on Mackenzie's Address of 1788. The reception of translations in the 1790s was conditioned by translations of the 1760s and 1770s.

The two chapters on Gessner are connected by one on Winckelmann, and the three study the way in which neo-classical theory was delivered in this country and provided with popular literary models to establish it in the public taste. The importance of this for 19th century Romantic poetry is assumed. The connection of these translations with experiments in 'poetic prose' is traced and the Radical implications of the German pastoral before 1798 are outlined.

The next chapters on Holcroft, Mackenzie and Fuseli suggest that, by their circumstances and by their natures, they failed to introduce effectively the new German writing, in particular drama, to Britain. The ill-acknowledged influence of the French is stressed, so is the fact that Mackenzie's Address was more of a defence against an attack than an introduction.

The remaining chapters consider the shallow nature of German influence at its apparent height in the 1790s. The Speculator's flawed critical approach was not corrected over the next nine years. Goethe's lack of success is explained by the sequence and merit of his translations. Schiller's absence from the public stage is examined and related to the political climate. Kotzebue, it is proposed, was as popular as he and the contemporary theatre deserved.

The first of the two chapters on William Taylor considers the source and the limitations of his brilliance as a translator; the second his inflated reputation as a critic.

Finally the relationship between the German novels translated before 1794 and the 'German Gothic' novels is discussed and an attempt made to estimate the reality behind the myth of the latter.

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I wish to thank my Supervisor, Dr. Rolf Lass of the University of Warwick, for his consistent, open minded encouragement over the happy three years of my study period. My particular thanks too must go to Dr. Timothy Mowl who was working on his D.Phil. thesis in Architectural History at St. John's College. Dr. Mowl's knowledge of the complex routines and sources of the Bodleian Library was invaluable to me in my first months and his mastery of eighteenth century aesthetics was a constant enrichment.

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Finally I thank all those librarians at the Bodleian who helped me to, literally, several thousand often very obscure books and who never complained when my shelf brimmed with many more than the statutory sixteen withdrawals. Though I used the British Library when I wished to consult the more ephemeral publications and the extraordinarily efficient Cambridge University Library to fill a few gaps, the writing of my thesis will always be associated in my mind with the great panelled quadrangle of the Bodleian, the statue of the Earl of Pembroke stuck brazen at the door, and that changing vista of domes and spires from the Upper Reading Room which is a standing incitement to over-writing.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis was never intended as a comparative study of two literatures. The author has no command of the German language in either its written or its spoken forms and he began the thesis with only a vague awareness of what were the accepted modern critical assessments of German literature. It would be meaningless for him to have attempted any comment on a text in the original German. Nevertheless, he believes that it was neither perverse nor paradoxical to consider his ignorance as an actual advantage in approaching a study of translations from German into English between the years 1760 and 1800. Such translations are, in the broad, and sometimes in the particular, sense of the term, a part of English literature, and it is as English literature in their exact eighteenth century English form and sequence that they have been considered.

One of the most insular reactions of the British to their early Hanoverian monarchs was their indifference to the language which these kings spoke. It was the Edinburgh Review of October 1813[1] which remarked that thirty years before there had probably been as many Persian as German scholars in London. Yet anyone who reads around the English pre-Romantics and early Romantics will soon find in the periodicals the names of Klopstock, Gessner, Wieland, Goethe, Schiller, Bürger and Kotzebue. Clearly many British writers of the period and large sections of the reading public were interested in German literature and believed that it influenced them. In fact, since they could not read the original German, they were really being influenced by the translations and these translations are, therefore, likely to be the key to an understanding of the degree and the course of the German enthusiasm.

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1. Edinburgh Review, XII (1813), p.201.

It may seem an impudence to claim an advantage in this branch of 'German studies' over scholars with a thorough knowledge of German and German literature. The impression of impertinence stems from the error that these translations, delivered to a non-German speaking public, are anything but a part of 'English literature'. An informed, modern evaluation of the writings in their original German is likely to prove not merely an irrelevance to but a distraction from an understanding of their first reception in a Britain which was anything but informed in its German scholarship. It has seemed, therefore, reasonable to share, with the minimum preconceptions, the eighteenth century reader's experience of 'German literature' by reading the eighteenth century translations and commentaries in sequence. This should provide a base for an interpretation of eighteenth century reactions uninfluenced by knowledge and attitudes which eighteenth century readers could not have shared.

By this advantage of a combined ignorance of the originals and careful reading of the earliest translations in the context of their contemporary reception the thesis has grown to suggest broad reappraisals of some 'minor' figures like Gessner and some 'major' figures like Goethe, though always strictly within the limits of these early translations. When, for instance, a review of an English translation of Wieland's Agathon speaks of Wieland as a disciple of Sterne it will not be assumed that because the translation reads like Sterne then the original read likewise. But there will be a safe assumption that contemporary English readers would believe that Wieland had copied Sterne, and such a fact could be significant. Similarly when this thesis speaks of 'the best' of Kotzebue's plays it will be making no judgement of what Kotzebue himself wrote in German, only giving the author's opinion on which is 'the best' of the twenty odd plays of Kotzebue in their translated English forms.

A few examples will serve to illustrate the way in which the informed comments of experts in German literature have sometimes been less than helpful.

A pre-knowledge of German literature distracted G.H. Needler from the actual force of Walter Scott's version: Goetz of Berlichingen of Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand. After listing some of the inaccuracies and gaps in Scott's translation he comments:

> We are forced to ask ourselves how it was that a man of twenty seven could so act the playboy as to make, and publish, a translation showing such an astounding inability to understand fully the language of the original...An hour or two of excellent entertainment is in store for anyone who, with Goethe's original before him, will read Scott's translation.[1]

'Excellent entertainment' perhaps for a pedantic linguist with a taste for condescension. But that linguist would then miss the true impact of Scott's Goetz on the overwhelmingly non-German speaking readers of the time. Introduced, not as an exciting piece of revolutionary theatre but as an exposition of the conflict between Crown and aristocracy in a foreign land, a sub-chapter to the Whig version of history, the translation would appear full, careful and dull. So what a German speaker finds hilariously unscholarly would have given an actual contemporary impression of being heavily scholarly and was, for that reason and not for its 'schoolboy howlers', generally ignored. It was a marker in fact, like Coleridge's genuinely scholarly Wallenstein, to the end of the period of popular German enthusiasm.

William Taylor's Nathan the Wise affords another kind of instance of the rewarding complexities which are discovered when an eighteenth century version of a German original is examined.

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1. G.H. Needler, Goethe and Scott (Toronto, 1950), p.28.

Kenwood in an article 'Lessing in England' reacts according to his pre-knowledge:

> No person with any worthy knowledge of Lessing's work can say, on reading Taylor's Nathan, that the poem is as it would have been had Lessing been an Englishman. In fact, the coupling of that great name with the wayward quaintness, the vague playfulness, the affected spelling and the original idiom of Taylor is almost laughable. Yet this must be the ultimate test of translation; and under that test Taylor's Nathan fails.[1]

Here again a German speaker, has missed, through superior laughter, the reality of a text. To a reader, unhindered by knowledge of 'that gneat name', Lessing, in the original, Taylor's Nathan the Wise seems brilliantly original in its colloquial verse flow and occasional passages of disturbing compression. If it is recognised as a fine piece of innovatory writing two important questions then have to be asked: why was it virtually unpublished in the decade, the 1790s, when it was printed, and why did Wordsworth complain of Nathan 'as tedious'.[2] in conversation with Klopstock on, or near, 26 September 1798? At that date Wordsworth knew no German and so must have been referring to Taylor's Nathan. Here is an indication that the poet, who had recently written The Borderers in a blank verse teeming with Shakespearian, and some Miltonic, echoes, had had access to Taylor's far more contemporary and flexible experiment in blank verse and rejected it.

It is not for the writer of this thesis to say how much Taylor owed to the original style of Lessing, though Taylor's translation, The Devil in Ban, of Voss's poem has much the same register and suggests that Taylor's own voice was dominant in both. What matters is to read such a translation as a piece of English, not German, literature and to give it its contemporary

1. Sidney H. Kenwood, 'Lessing in England', MLR, ix (1914), 197-212, 344-358(p.207)
2. Reported by Coleridge. 'He' (Klopstock) 'said Lessing was the first of their dramatic Writers. I complained of Nathan as tedious'. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by Barbara Rooke, 5 vols. (Princeton, 1969), ii, p.244.

value, also, perhaps, even to suggest its neglected present day value.

These are relatively minor instances, but by an accumulation of such the thesis attempts to explain the British reputation of writers like Gessner, Goethe and Kotzebue, the mere linking together of whose names might seem an absurdity to a German literary scholar, but who would have seemed to be of at least equal worth to an English eighteenth century reader, with Goethe probably lagging behind the other two.

It is emphasised that the title of the thesis is: Translations from the German and their reception in Britain, 1760-1800, it is not 'and their influence in Britain'. The words 'reception' and 'influence' are close, but they are not synonymous. The main business of the thesis has been to consider the actual form and literary value of the translations and to trace contemporary response to them, particularly in the periodicals, prefaces and commentaries. When the work of an English writer seems close to a translated German work this is mentioned, but the thesis aims to suggest a general climate of opinion rather than to list actual cases of proven influence.

There is, for instance, no attempt to state that Wordsworth's poems in the Lyrical Ballads were directly influenced by Diderot's The story of the two friends of Bourbon, included in W. Hooper's translation of Gessners New Idyls (1776). But it is interesting that Wordsworth used pastoral poems to convey social protest and that a German writer, long popular in England, included in his harmless pastoral collection a short story of bitter social protest by a French author. It is for the reader to take these facts for influences, affinities, parallels or the effects of a general movement in sensibility.

The actual limits of the period covered are not arbitrary; they were directed by the interrelation of the translations. This was not an interrelation of mood or theme, though a direct emotional warmth

is a consistent common factor to almost every German work considered; but it has several sources.

The first and most concrete link is the fact that translations from Gessner and Wieland were being made right through the forty year time span, and they were not just being made, they were widely popular. Apart from their staying power the two writers had little in common. Gessner's forms, which pleased in 1762, were unchanged, but still pleasing, in 1768 when he himself was ten years in the grave. Wieland, though always urbane in translation, was constantly experimenting and 1798 was marked by the most novel of his works to appear in English, Oberon. This was quite unlike any of his works previously introduced, yet it is likely to have profited by a warmth and familiarity that dated back to his earliest translation, a full thirty four years before.

Quite unlike this cumulative interrelation by sheer longevity is the interrelation by the device of criticism through sensitive identification with the object of study. This links Fuseli's version of Winckelmann's aesthetic responses to classical statues, in 1766 and 1768, with Beddoes's translations of passages from Goethe, in 1798, which make similar sympathetic identification with Hamlet and Ophelia.

The fortunes of the Sturm und Drang in Britain in terms of its influence are difficult to limit. On the one hand an interest in Gessner's Death of Abel in 1761 and Goethe's Stella, as late as 1798, indicate that these enthusiasms are part of a European pre-Romanticism which antedated the Sturm und Drang movement and outlasted it. On the other hand the British reaction to Goethe's works in the 1790s is only explicable in terms of Goethe's notoriety in the true Sturm und Drang of the 1770s. Either way confirms the unity of the period of the thesis.

Another unifying factor of the period even harder to define is the amateurish, almost naive, quality common to the translations. After Beddoes

in 1796 a scholarly confidence creeps into the translations. There will be reviewers at hand ready to expound Kant and Herder, not merely to mock their eccentric style; but at the same time something popular and organic in the way that the earlier translations appeared to fill intuited gaps in English writing, The Sorrows of Werter (1779) was the prime example, will have gone for ever.

In these first forty years the British reading public had virtually no expectations of 'greatness' or direction as to the ranking of the German writers who were translated. The response was uninformed, most varied in quality, but largely spontaneous. What the British took at second hand from another literature, the form in which they adopted it, and the order of its taking reveal much of their own standards, taste and literary hunger at a period which Fuseli himself marked, probably rightly, as one of vacancy.

This is the justification of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

'A kind of poetic prose' - Salomon Gessner and the Anglo-Swiss interaction of the 1760s

Two books written in German and published in the 1750s: J.G. Zimmermann's Über die Einsamkeit, (Zurich, 1756), and S. Gessner's Der Tod Abels, (Zurich, 1758), both became immensely popular in their English translations. But while Gessner's Death of Abel was translated in 1761 and had gone through seven English and eight American editions by 1770, Zimmermann's Solitude was not translated into English until 1791, though it was in its eighth edition by 1800. The divergence in publishing history points to the difference between the well known 'German Mania' in England in the 1790s and that less noted wave of German influence in the 1760s, which could reasonably be called the 'Swiss Enthusiasm'.

This Swiss literary period of the 1760s in England was concerned, in forms, with experiments in free verse; in content it was pietistic, pastoral and Hellenic; the whole can reasonably be described as neo-Classical. The later 'German Mania' of the 1790s could be called Gothic but that would be an uneasy generalisation. One at least of the neo-Classical authors of the Swiss decade, Gessner, remained influential right through the forty years of this study, enjoying new translations and further editions well into the 19th century[1]; and a translation of Goethe's purely neo-Classical Iphigenia was published in London in 1793. But generally translations from the German in the 1790s had themes of physical violence, social permissiveness and the supernatural. Three representative works might be Schiller's The Robbers (London, 1792), Kotzebue's The Stranger (London, 1798), and Karl Grosse's Horrid Mysteries (London, 1796). In all three of these the English interest was in their content rather than their form. This was

1. The original translation of the Death of Abel by Mary Collyer reached its 20th edition in 1799.

generally true of translations of the 1790s, in contrast to the German writings entering England in the 1760s, when the experimental form was often their prime interest.

Intellectually and even emotionally Solitude seems a much more impressive work than The Death of Abel, so there may be significant reasons why it came to England thirty years after its rival. Solitude brims with anecdotes of suicide and violence. It strikes stagey attitudes around Alpine peaks and lists independence of spirit and brooding melancholy as signs of potential genius:

> If you see a youth fall into a low and melancholy humour....if you perceive that his mind emits its rays like flashes of lightning in the obscurity of a dark night and then falls into a long and silent calm....if you discover that he feels himself surrounded by a painful void, and that every object which presents itself only inspires his mind with new aversion and disgust, you then behold, notwithstanding he has not openly complained, a happy plant, which only requires the cultivation of a judicious hand to bring forth its fruits and disclose its beauties.
>
> O! apply to it a fostering care....he who stops the progress of its life is the most detestable of murderers.[1]

This accords well with that enthusiasm for things essentially Sturm und Drang which was current in the 1790s; but if it had come to England in 1761, the second year of Tristram Shandy, it might have been considered extremist. A country may wait for a translation until the literary mood is ready for it. Perhaps The Sorrows of Werter (London, 1779) was needed before the

1. J.G. Zimmermann, Solitude considered with respect to its influence upon the mind and the heart (London, 1791), p.89. Translated by Dilly.

English reading public was prepared to philosophise over suicide. The books which were translated from German into English in the early 1760s represented only a mild innovation in their content; it was their new relaxation of literary forms that interested the readers of Ossian.

Gessner's writings, immediately, and far more lastingly, successful than Zimmermann's, have four marked characteristics. The first two: their Protestant pietism and their deep sentimentality, ensured that they were acceptable to the widest range of English readers; the second two: their feeling for Greek as opposed to Roman classical content and their stylistic innovation in the borderland between prose and poetry, disposed them to influence the forms and images of the English Romantic movement.

Mackenzie's lecture to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1788 is often given an unreasonable prominence in literary surveys of the period. Henry Mackenzie, himself the author of a highly emotional novel, The Man of Feeling (Edinburgh, 1771), was pointing in his address to the Sturm und Drang, to the wilder 'Gothic' Germans, Schiller in particular; and this has drawn attention away from the three previous decades of German translations with their Greek and pastoral bias. Of the five major English Romantic poets at least two, Shelley and Keats, are Theocritan in their prevailing landscapes. Wordsworth's best known verse is a realistic updating of the Theocritan forms into a late eighteenth century countryside tainted by enclosures and industrialism. The Lyrical Ballads came out only a few months after yet another new translation of Gessner's Idyls (Edinburgh, 1798). Even Byron, the most Gothic of the five, had his childhood marred by a tedious German teacher, who used to cry his eyes out over Abel's death. Coleridge, of course, actually translated Gessner, largely as an exercise, though probably owing less to him than any of the other four.

It is widely accepted that Romanticism is an elusive term and that neo-Classical and Gothic influences have equal right to be considered parts

of the Romantic movement. It has been a favourite critical exercise to trace the development of Gothic literature up through the 18th century by way of the Marchioness of Winchelsea, Lady Wardlaw, Home, Gray, Macpherson, Percy, Leland, Walpole and then, by the devious advance of the Gothic plays and novels, to Mrs. Radcliffe. Far less attention has been paid to the perfecting of neo-Classical literature, and this for the very good reason that English writers spent very little time on this and were very maladroit in their efforts. After Pope the English poets spawned many Georgics: John Philip's Cyder, 1708, John Dyer's The Fleece, 1757, James Grainger's Sugar Cane, 1764, but none of them escaped from the Twickenham diction, rhythm and general register of Pope. They are all stale and mannered in their style. Because the English produced such extraordinarily fresh and inventive versions of Theocritus in their landscape gardens (or at least of Theocritus as interpreted by Claude and Poussin) it is assumed that there was an equally happy tradition of eclogues and shepherd's verse developing through the last decades of the century, ready to be picked up by major Romantics in the Lyrical Ballads, Alastor and Endymion. And so, in a sense, there was, but it was not an English tradition, it was a Swiss one. Salomon Gessner's Idyllen were translated twice in 1762: as Rural Poems, anonymously and successfully, then as Select Poems from Mr G.....'s pastorals, by Anne Penny in disastrous heroic couplets. After 1762 Gessner's 'Idyls', as they tended to be spelt, were never long out of the literary magazines in their 'poetic prose' versions. This was because the process of translation from an experimental foreign verse form had resulted in a refreshing escape from predictable diction and flat clichés. Gessner's 'Idyls' in their English form are the only worthy literary equivalents of Flaxman's

linear drawings, Athenian Stuart's plates [1] and Henry Holland's colonnades. Visually, in their houses, gardens and art collections the English had a rich Hellenic inheritance, dating back to the Duke of Norfolk's collection of sculpture in Charles I's reign, but their versions of the Hellenic pastoral were lacking in just those qualities of spare elegance and rural simplicity which were the essence of the form. This lack Gessner's translators supplied.

This is a considerable claim and must be supported by an examination of the texts; but this Greek purity of descriptive form was not Gessner's only innovation. Unexpectedly, and in The Death of Abel rather than in his 'Idyls', the Gessner translations suggest more than a hint of the Sturm und Drang.

This term 'Sturm und Drang' is elusive in English usage; probably for that reason it is rarely translated but left in the original German. As a period in German literature it was brief; 1758, the date when Gessner wrote Der Tod Abels, is some years before the Sturm und Drang became a recognisable movement; The Death of Abel has, nevertheless, some of that character of the combined tremulous and tremendous which justifies a tentative Sturm und Drang label.

The position of the Gessner translations in the 1760s is a complex one. They introduce three elements: innovatory free verse, the pure Hellenic pastoral forms of neo-Classicism and a foretaste of the turgid self-indulgent emotionalism of the Sturm and Drang. Unlike Thomas Percy's translation, Han Kiou Choaan (1761) of a Chinese novel, they were not brief curiosities but widely and enduringly popular.

1. The history of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's magnificent illustrated volumes The Antiquities of Athens is a melancholy one of delay. They were working in Greece in 1751 and returned to England in 1755, but their first volume did not come out until 1762 just as the Swiss hellenising of English literature was in full swing. As usual at this period the French beat the English. J.D. Le Roy's Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce came out in 1758.

The decade in which they appeared has, itself, claims to be considered as the most innovative, in a literary sense, of the century, one far more inclined to experiment than even the 1790s.

By the end of the 1750s the confining forms of Augustan verse and prose had become so irksome that the next decade was to be full of counter-reaction. Macpherson's Ossian came out in parts between 1760 and 1763, cracking the accepted moulds of poetry and creating great interest all over Northern Europe. Sterne's Tristram Shandy was publishing between 1760 and 1769. Percy's Five Runic Pieces came out in 1762, his Reliques in 1765. Between Leland's Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, 1762,and Walpole's Castle of Otranto, 1765, the Gothic novel was shaped. In these works are found most of the approaches, stylistic and intuitive of later Romantic literature; the next twenty years, from 1770 to 1790, were notably lacking in experiment.

The Swiss Enthusiasm needs to be seen against this background. It was a natural growth of the literary interests of the decade. Because they were foreign these Swiss works were seen as exotic at a time when exotic writings offered an escape from a stale native tradition; but their exoticism was essentially respectable, combining turgid effusions of religious sensibility with limpid passages of Arcadian prose. Their style was almost as novel as that of Ossian, their subject matter was far more improving and, while their provenance was less romantic, they carried with them no suspicion of fakery and sham.

These German writers who appeared so abruptly in the review columns of the 1760s were closely associated with Zurich. J. Bodmer, 1698-1783, was the father figure; the next 'generation' was F.G. Klopstock, 1724-1803, Salomon Gessner, 1730-1788, and C.M. Wieland, 1733-1813; J.K. Lavater, born in 1741 and John Henry Fuseli 1741 form a slightly younger second generation. The arch Grecian of them all, Winckelmann, was a Prussian, but even he was a close friend of Fuseli's father and uncle, who were Zurich born.

Fuseli himself, Winckelmann's translator into English, was Gessner's godson; so the connections are close, so close indeed as to suggest some kind of harmless literary conspiracy.

The actual order of the translations of this group was:-

1761 The Death of Abel, by Gessner, translated by Mary Collyer.

1762 Rural Poems, by Gessner, translated anonymously.

1762 Select Poems from M. Gessner's Pastorals, translated by Ann Penny.

1763 The Messiah, by Klopstock, translated by Joseph Collyer

1763 The Death of Adam, by Klopstock, translated by Robert Lloyd.

1765 Reflections on the painting and sculpture of the Greeks, by Winckelmann, translated by Fuseli.

1767 Noah, by Bodmer, translated by Joseph Collyer.

1768 Daphnis, by Gessner, translated by Charlotte Butler and her father.

1776 New Idylles, by Gessner, translated by W. Hooper.

This is a list of first editions and first translations only.

Gessner was clearly the dominant figure and it seems likely that it was the immediate success of The Death of Abel, part religious epic and part sentimental pastoral, which brought the other Swiss books into England in its wake. Only Fuseli's version of Winckelmann's first treatise on Greek art, Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke, is in a different pattern; and that was not an ordinary commercial venture like the others but probably something which Fuseli was sent to England as a cultural ambassador to publish. All the books, except Ann Penny's, which is in rigid heroic couplets, reflect to some extent the strained and experimental style of Mary Collyer's Abel. It is important then to consider exactly what license she thought she had when she worked on it, using, almost certainly, not the original German text, for B.Q. Morgan describes

her version as 'imitation rather than translation'[1], but Huber's French translation of 1759.

The first edition opens with a fullsome five page dedication to the German Queen, Charlotte, whom George III had just married. English indifference to German literature during the first forty five years of Hanoverian rule must be explained partly by contempt for the character of the monarchs and partly by the sheer lack of anything in Germany worth paying attention to. But now the married life of the third George was domestic and moral, very acceptable to a mercantile society with a strong Protestant ethic and a taste for cant. Because Charlotte lived on into unappealing old age it is possible to underrate the desire of writers in the first years of the reign to stress the connection of moral German literature with a young, moral and popular Queen.

Mary Collyer's dedication claimed her translation as 'the affectionate industry of a fond mother'[2], and concluded to the Queen;

> May your exemplary virtues, united with those of our beloved Sovereign, put wickedness to shame, and force vice to hide its head. May all ranks, influenced by Royal Precedent, and the manners of Your Court, grow ashamed of licentiousness, inhumanity, profaneness, and dissipation.[3]

She is not precise, in her Translator's Preface, as to exactly what style she is translating from or which form she is translating it into in English. But this vagueness is common to all Gessner's translators and free verse has remained elusive of definition. Mrs. Collyer sweeps confidently into stylistic revolution with:

1. B.Q. Morgan, A bibliography of German Literature in English Translation (Madison, 1922), p.139.
2. Salomon Gessner, The Death of Abel (London, 1761), p.v. Translated by Mary Collyer.
3. Ibid. p.v-vi.

> All our author's works, of which this is the first that has been translated into English, are wrote in a kind of loose poetry, unshackled by the tagging of rhymes, or counting of syllables. This method of writing seems perfectly suited to the German language, and is of a middle species between verse and prose: it has the beauties of the first with the ease of the last.[1]

which would be an astonishing claim if Ossian's success had not underwritten such a compromise in the year preceding. But the translator showed no uncertainty, believing that she and Gessner were part of a wider new movement. The style, she continued, was not peculiar to Gessner, 'for in this manner the great Fénélon wrote his Telemachus, of which the public will soon be favoured with an elegant translation by the able hand of Dr. Hawkesworth.'[2] As Dr John Hawkesworth's The Adventures of Telemachus, the sixth English translation of the Archbishop of Cambray's book, did not come out, with its neo-Classical frontispiece and after-cuts, until 1768, it seems likely that the two translators were comparing notes much earlier.

It is necessary to return to the point that The Death of Abel, perhaps the most successful of all eighteenth century translations from the German, was probably in fact a translation from the French. This was to be a recurring situation during the period. France stood between England and Germany all through the eighteenth century interrelation of the two literatures. Both England and Germany resented French eminence, but both nations were dazzled by it. Aware of their linguistic brotherhood the two nations turned to each other as a way of escaping from the brilliance and prestige of French letters. Ironically, by their insular incompetence

1. Salomon Gessner, The Death of Abel (London, 1761), p.xxii. Translated by Mary Collyer.
2. Ibid. p.xxiii.

in tongues, the English were obliged again and again to read German poetry and plays in French translations. So it is not remarkable that Mrs. Collyer should justify this new 'loose poetry' by pointing out that Fénélon had made the style respectable as early as 1699.

Mrs. Collyer and Dr. Hawkesworth were both working at the same task: the writing of convincingly pure and austere descriptions of neo-Classical landscapes. This was something to which contemporary English prose was ill adapted,but the discipline of translating foreign prose seemed to produce it. Overall Hawkesworth's book was the more successful:

> A band of Phenician youths, of exquisite beauty, cloathed in fine linen whiter than snow, entertained them a longwhile with dancing in the manner of their country, after with the dances of Egypt, and last with those of Greece. At proper intervals, the shrill voice of the trumpet interposed, and the waves resounded to the distant shores. The silence of the night, the calmness of the sea, the lambent radiance of the moon, which trembled on the surface of the waves, and the deep azure of the sky spangled with a thousand stars, concurred to heighten the beauty of the scene.[1]

In an equivalent passage: the dream which the fiend Anamelech gave to Cain, Mrs. Collyer attained much the same effect but was less able to resist the obvious epithets:

> Cain saw in his dream flocks white as the falling snow, sporting in the meadows, or cropping the plenteous herbage, while the indolent shepherd, whose head was encircled with a wreath of flowers, lay reclin'd under the spreading palm, chanting to the sympathising object

1. F.S. de la Mothe-Fénélon, The Adventures of Telemachus (London, 1768), p.145. Translated by J. Hawkesworth.

> of his passion an amorous lay. There boys blooming as the Loves, and girls sweet as the Graces, assembled under arches of interwoven honeysuckles and myrtle, where with agile feet they form'd the festive dance. The bright juice of the grape sparkled in golden goblets, and delicious fruits were spread on tables cover'd with flowers; while the ambiant air resounded with vocal and instrumental harmony.[1]

In addition to her own preface Mrs. Collyer translated Gessner's original Author's Preface. This is defensive in tone, chiefly concerned to excuse the fact that he had added to Holy Scripture. Its last phrases are hostile to French influence. Gessner ends with heavy irony, saying that, to please depraved French taste he would have had to 'introduce an amorous intrigue, for what is an epic poem without a love adventure? Abel shall be a languishing petit maitre; Cain a rough captain of the Cossacks, and nothing shall come from the lips of Adam, that is not in character from a hoary Frenchman, hackney'd in the ways of the world.'[2] So at the very beginning of the German influence a rather defiant spitefulness about the French was normal.

It is difficult to understand why The Death of Abel should have had quite such an extraordinarily long run in English translation. Much of the diction is stilted and conventional: 'conjugal tenderness defus'd inexpressible graces on every word and every gesture'[3], and many sentences ramble:

> The tranquil hours had just give to Aurora the tint of the rose, and dispell'd the vapours of the night that had hover'd over the shadowy

1. Salomon Gessner, The Death of Abel (London, 1761), p.150.
2. Ibid. p.xviii-xix.
3. Ibid. p.11.

> earth, while the sun beginning to dart his first rays behind the black cedars of the mountain, ting'd with radiant purple the half enlighten'd clouds when ABEL and his beloved THIRZA left their leafy couch, and repair'd to a neighbouring bower composed of interwoven jasmin and roses.[1]

In its plot The Death of Abel is 'The Return of Paradise Lost', or 'The Wrath of God Mark 2', but it contains infinitely more flights of wild emotion than Milton's poem and it is these which suggest the feeling of the later Sturm und Drang. Cain's anger when God accepts Abel's sacrifice is typical of the work's self indulgent rant:

> I cannot help cursing him with trembling lips— But turn, unhappy wretch, turn thy fury on thyself. Come, O death, O destruction come, and put a period to my miseries and my life! Why, O my father, dids't thou suffer thyself to be seduc'd? Why, O my mother, didst thou intail miseries on thy wretched offspring? Shall I present myself before ye in the horrors of my despair? Shall my agonies, my terrors, my insupportable wretchedness show you the distresses your fatal lapse prepar'd for your descendants? Ah! no. Revenge not, unhappy man....[2]

and so on for, literally, another two pages. Finally Cain, 'the prey of wild despair', goes out followed by his loyal wife 'into the desert regions where had never been imprinted the foot of man'[3]. Though he curses himself at great length he shows a certain appalled satisfaction at having committed the ultimate sin. The psychological issue which is at the centre of the book: the mutual hatred of two brothers, is not very different to the central conflict of Schiller's Die Räuber; and the popularity of The Death of Abel

1. Gessner, Death of Abel (London, 1761), p.3-4.
2. Ibid. p.139.
3. Ibid. p.259.

seems to indicate the early interest of a wide European reading public in Gothic villains. To have set this Gothic character in an over-coloured neo-Classical Arcady was Gessner's basic stroke of genius and probably explains what otherwise is inexplicable: the fact that in 1797 The Monthly Review was still writing:

> ....truth, good sense, and wit, though they strike most forcibly on the mind when conveyed in proper terms, will shine with much lustre through any version or language. This is particularly the case with regard to Gessner. His Pastorals, Daphnis, and the Death of Abel are translated not only into the more polite languages of Europe, but also into those of the Sclavonian Stock, e.g., the Hungarian. In England, his works have been generally read ever since their appearance, and there is scarsely a book stall in the metropolis which does not exhibit some part of his poetry for sale.[1]

Such encomiums were common for at least another twenty years into the nineteenth century. Wordsworth set 'he who penned, the other day, the Death of Abel' into Book 7 of The Prelude alongside The Bible, Shakespeare and Ossian. More significantly, for it indicates that the 1760s were waiting for exactly what Gessner would give them, a reviewin The Critical Review of 1760[2] praised Huber's La Mort d'Abel, (Paris 1749) extravagantly, writing of an admirable flexibility of genius', 'the superior excellencies of the poet', characters of 'great propriety' and 'several exquisite rural descriptions'. The review may well have prompted Mary Collyer to write her translation of the same work into English.

The first review by a periodical of the English translation was much more cautious. No one reading the Annual Register's[3] account of The Death of Abel

1. Monthly Review (1797), xxii, p.548.
2. Critical Review (1760), x, p.427.
3. Annual Register (1761), iv, p.287.

would guess that this book was to be a best seller for a century:

> If the fable should not interest, at least his descriptions, his hymns and all those parts, which leave room for fancy to display itself, may engage the reader's attention. We must not omit to mention that the German has read our Milton with great attention, so that Anameleck's escape from hell to tempt man will be more admired by strangers to our language, than it can be by those who have read Milton.[1]

Reviewers of the 1790s were to take the same flattered assurance from the likeness between Schiller and Shakespeare.

The Annual Register was the only periodical to review Abel in the year of its publication. It was mentioned six times in 1762 but only two accounts were of any length, five pages in all. Rural Poems by Gessner, which came out in 1762, was reviewed four times in the same year and given thirteen pages of comment and quotation. This suggests that the pastoral Idyls were received more readily by polite society than the earlier emotional and devotional Abel. Certainly one of Abel's most important influences was to popularise its author and prepare English readers for the more refined, (though earlier, 1756, in original date) eclogues.

What is interesting, by the light it casts on contemporary English receptivity to verse-prose, prose-verse, was the virtual rejection in 1763 of the Rev. Thomas Newcombe's The Death of Abel, 'Attempted in the stile of Milton'. Newcombe was a prestigious literary figure who had made a small fortune by the subscription sale of his earlier Miltonic imitation The Last Judgement in 1723. His wholly traditional Abel might have been

1. Annual Register (1761), iv, p.287.

expected quite to eclipse Mrs. Collyer's contorted prose. As the Critical Review wrote: 'Though the prose translation has a great deal of merit, as it gives us an exact idea of the design, fable and sentiment of the original, nothing but poetry could bestow on it that warmth of colouring, which is perhaps the most striking beauty in all poetical productions'[1]. In fact no single copy of Newcombe's Abel survives in any of the great libraries of the English speaking world. Its quality can only be judged from excerpts in the review, but a comparison is important as this is an occasion when prose-verse was offered to the public as a clear alternative to traditional blank verse and the reading public voted absolutely for the more experimental form.

Mrs. Collyer's version of Abel's morning hymn went:

> Thus nature celebrates the returning light, and pays to Nature's God the sacrifice of grateful praise. Praise him all things that exist; praise him whose wisdom and goodness produc'd and preserves all. Ye springing flowers exhale the sweets he gave you in his praise. Ye wing'd inhabitants of the grove, pour forth the melody of your little throats to his praise, who gave you voice and melody; while the majestic lion pays him honour with the terrors of his mouth, and makes the caverns of the rocks re-echo his praise.[2]

for the same passage the Rev. Newcombe wrote:

> All nature celebrates the birth of day;
> And breaths to Nature's God a song of praise;
> Whose voice from nothing call'd, whose goodness cheers,
> Feeds and supports each creature which he fram'd,

1. Critical Review (1763), xvi, p.50.
2. Gessner, The Death of Abel (1761), p.7.

Join in the song ye tenants of the grove;
Warbling, in grateful notes, Jehovah's praise.
Ye dread majestic lions, learn to pay
Homage to him, who has your voices armed
With wrath and terror![1]

The contest is finely drawn but the second version probably carries the heavier load of cliché and strikes less directly. But it is the result which is significant: the first went on to lasting popularity; the second survives only in a few pages of a review.

Another indication of the strength of interest in foreign verse-prose at this point was the inclusion, in the same volume of the Annual Register for 1761 which gave the Collyer Abel its first review, of 'Fragments of Celtic Poetry, from Olaus Verelius, a German Writer, literally translated'. The fragments were Icelandic, not Celtic and Verelius was not German but Swedish. The fragments were part of what Thomas Percy was to publish in 1763 as Five Pieces of Runic Poetry with a Runic epigraph and a sardonic preface withering the credibility of Macpherson's Ossian. The fragments being authentic and translated with Percy's usual good taste, put the quality of Abel into perspective and indicate the stylistic direction of the decade's early years:

The daughter comes by midnight to the tomb of her deceased father, and thus begins her solemn incantation over his grave.
"Awake, Agantyr, Hervor the only daughter of thee and Suafa doth awake thee. Give me out of thy tomb the hardened sword which the dwarfs made for Suafarlama, Hervandur, Hiorvardur, Herani and Angantyr, with helmet and coat of mail and a sharp sword, with shield and accoutrements, and bloody spear. I wake you all under the roots of trees.[2]

1. The Critical Review (1763), xvi, p.50.
2. Annual Register (1761), iv, p.261.

The Northern European literary nations were groping for a lost heritage and an identity separate from Greece and Rome. Even Gessner was a part of this stirring because, though he aimed at Theocritus, he was Germanic and to the English there was something wild in his rhetorical religiosity and loose in his prim pastorals.

The second translation of Gessner into English was Rural Poems[1] in 1762 by an anonymous author. The anonymity is disappointing as the Preface is intelligently analytical and the translating style is excellent. In form and content the Idyls were at least as popular as The Death of Abel and far more important as a literary influence. The Preface by the translator of Rural Poems reveals an altogether sharper and more sophisticated linguist: someone exactly aware of the austerity he had to convey and the pitfalls into which his immediate predecessor had tumbled.

He stated the difficulties of translating poetry rather than prose: 'Nothing less...than a poet equal to the original composition can give an adequate translation of a masterly poem. And,indeed even in such a case, although the copy should not be inferior to the original it would be in a great measure different.'[2] There were even greater difficulties when translating 'compositions of the pastoral kind, wherein so much depends on that unaffected and native simplicity of style, which is so difficult to be attained in any one language, and much more so to be communicated to another.'[3]

This last comment needs to be stressed. The modern reader is inclined to dismiss 'compositions of the pastoral kind' as the most stylised of all poetry and the furthest from 'native simplicity of style'. But this is not a translator given to empty words, as his examples a few pages later

1. M. Ges ner (sic), Rural Poems, (London, 1762). These had also been translated previously into French. Turgot himself began that translation and M. Huber completed it.
2. M. Gesner (sic), Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.vi.
3. Ibid p.vii-viii.

demonstrate. This writer saw a mid-century opportunity to simplify and reform by using a foreign model. By his sensitive awareness, the pastoral form would be able, in forty years time, to include 'The Thorn', 'The Idiot Boy' and 'Michael'. When he wrote that it was 'the minute and circumstantial marks of description, which frequently enter into this species of poetry'[1] which would give him the most trouble, he was saying that contemporary English simply could not, as yet, convey plain visual description of simple country affairs.

He could render Gessner 'in a smoother flowing verse, which might have been more agreeable to the ear of the English reader', or he could have given 'a more exact translation of them in prose'. Neither alternative satisfies him so he was obviously looking for something between. But then he seems to block his own course by attacking 'that florid style, which has been of late much affected by our fine writers, and is quaintly termed by some PROSAIC VERSE, or POETIC PROSE'[2]. But now, instead of just hurling insults like 'verbose' and swelling bombast', he goes on to give one of the very rare examples in the whole field of eighteenth century translations from the German of a translator's stylistic, as opposed to factual, error:

> ...an example, taken from some late, not inelegant, attempts towards a translation of these pastorals. 'The sprightly lark, mounting aloft, hails with her cheerful note the new born day', says the translator. The author, simply, thus: 'Wie froh singet die kleine Lerche in der hohen luft!' ie 'How merry sings the little soaring lark!' This conciseness and simplicity of expression is certainly the best pleas for disregarding measure in pieces of this kind: For if number and rhime be laid aside, circumlocution and redundancy are without excuse.[3]

1. M. Gesner (sic), Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.viii.
2. Ibid p. xi.
3. Ibid p.xi..xii.

It is reasonable to suggest that here is the start of that argument which will end in Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads.

The anonymous writer then ventures into the uneasy question of what to do if 'rhime and measure' have been discarded, and the writer still wishes to avoid prose. Klopstock had achieved 'perhaps greater restraint by introducing the hexameter measure of Homer and Virgil into German poetry'. William Taylor of Norwich toyed with the same solution thirty-four years later,[1] but this consideration of possibilities is sheer evasion of the question. The only answer after all the clear thinking analysis of the problem was:

> Mr Gesner has not thought fit to write in any kind of measured verse, the want of it is abundantly made up, by the harmony of his periods, the conciseness, the elegance, and the simplicity of his style.[2]

If this is not a definition of free verse it is at least a formula for effective neo-Classical pastoral. Gessner's own preface, which follows, firmly links simplicity with the Greek. Gessner seems to have read Winckelmann as he joins him in his well known error about the Greek climate: 'They reside in a climate, where she needs but little assistance, from art, to furnish them plentifully with the innocent necessaries of life'. Winckelmann was an enthusiastic propagator of the notion that climate and country create art of their essence. He thought that Greece was a place 'where a temperature prevails that is between winter and summer'. Again Winckelmann divided Classical art into four great periods and Gessner seems to be thinking of the first, pre-Periclean, period when he writes: 'It is, indeed, the peculiar privilege of pastoral, to recur in the first ages of mankind.'[3]

1. Monthly Magazine (1797), iii, p.338.
2. Rural Poems, p.xiii.
3. Ibid, p.xviii.

It is when he turns to Theocritus that Gessner most exactly covers the ground which Wordsworth reworked when Wordsworth discussed the proper language of poetry in the Lyrical Ballads. Gessner wrote:

> I have always esteemed Theocritus as the best model in this kind of writing...His Idyllions contain a great deal more than mere roses and lilies. His descriptions are not the vague effect of an imagination, confined to the most obvious and common objects. They appear to be always copied immediately from Nature...He has given his shepherds the highest degree of innocent sincerity... The poetical ornaments of their conversation are, all of them, taken from their rural occupations....They have nothing of an epigrammatic turn, or scholarly affectation of period...He knew how to give to his poems, an agreeable air of innocence, adapted to those early ages, wherein the ingenuous sentiments of the heart assisted to warm the imagination, already excited by the most enchanting scenes of Nature. [1]

This compares with:

> Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended and more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. [2]

It is not easy to find anything new which Wordsworth has to add to Gessner; he only expresses the same things in a more acceptably pretentious style. His merit was to put the theory more effectively into practice and so draw critical attention to his own particular version of the neo-Classical theory. It is always allowed that Wordsworth toyed with the Sturm und Drang in the middle of the 1790s; it is not always so readily accepted that he worked in the earlier German tradition of Gessner in 1798. Coleridge's sharp attack on the superficialities of Gessner in his letters

1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.xx.
2. Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, edited by W.J.B. Owen (London, 1974), p.71.

to William Sotheby tends to distract awareness from the essential similarities between the aims of 1756 and those of 1797. Coleridge had just humoured Sotheby (admirer and translator of Wieland) by attempting a version of Gessner's Erster Schiffer, and wrote: 'The Poem was too silly....the Girl's yearnings and conversations with her mother are something between the Nursery and the Veneris Volgivagae Templa----It is not the thoughts that a lonely girl could have; but exactly such as a Boarding School Miss whose Imagination, to say no worse, had been somewhat stirred and heated by the perusal of French or German Pastorals, would suppose her to say'.[1]

This is tautological, since he was actually talking about a German pastoral; and ungenerous, if he had considered how much his own poetical diction of 1793 had been in need of that linguistic simplification which translators of Gessner's pastorals had actually set in train in 1762, and which came to him, through Wordsworth, at the time of the Lime Tree Bower poem.

Coleridge is accurately perceptive when he writes that Gessner's poetry, when translated into English, is only a rough form of iambic pentameters. Lycas, one of the ecologues from Rural Poems, is printed as straightforward prose. It has only to be set out in lines and it has a certain likeness to Keat's Endymion in its graceful, but rather incoherent, sweetness of image:

> 'Yes,love's a blessing words cannot express.
> This spot be consecrated then to love.
> I'll plant young rose trees round about this elm.
> Around its trunk the scammony shall grow,
> Adorned with flowers of purple-spotted white.

1. Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by E.L. Griggs, 8 vols. (Oxford, 1956), II, 810, dated 16 July 1802 from Greta Hall, Keswick.

Here I will gather all the sweets of Spring,
The piony and Lilly here shall blow.
I'll go and cull in meads and verdant fields,
The purple violet and sweet scented pink,
And all the sweetest shrubs and plants that grow.[1]

There is only one major irregularity of iambic scansion in the ten lines, some even rhyme, and the anonymous translator has fruitfully carried out Gessner's pledge to cut out 'the turn for epigram and quaintness of phrase, to keep a taste for the 'truly beautiful' instead of 'wit'.[2]

The whole book of twenty four ecologues, for the most part in 'refined' prose but often breaking into loose borderline poetry, keeps to this level and stands quite separate, and significantly so, from the general style of 18th century poetry. It has broken with Pope, yet not fallen into the usual alternative of Shakespearian rhythms. Too feminine in adjective choice to suggest the mature Wordsworth, it seems consistently to hint at the language and pace of Keats's first ambitious writings.

The detection of echoes can be subjective, but there is no more striking instance of this prophetic parallelism than the Faun's song of 'The Broken Jug.' A Faun has been captured while sleeping, by some young shepherds. They tie him up and he has to earn his freedom by a song about his jug. Jug it may be to him, but by the engravings on its side it sounds much more like the Warwick Vase or those engravings from the antique which Ian Jack suggests, in Keats and the Mirror of Art, the young Keats saw in Leigh Hunt's library.

In lively strokes was on its side engraved
The disappointment and affright of Pan,

1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.43.
2. Ibid. p.xx.

When the fair nymph, embrac'd within his arms,
Was changed into a tuft of rustling reeds.
There is he represented,as he stood
Cutting th' unequal reeds, which, join'd by wax,
He form'd into a flute, and on it play'd
The mournful ditty. Echo heard the sound,
And bade the wandering hills and woods repeat.
. . . . . .
On my fine jug was drawn Europa's bull,
That bore the ravish'd fair across the waves;
His flatt'ring tongue licking her bare white knee;
While o'er her head her wringing hands are rais'd,
And sporting Zephyrs fan her flowing hair,
And loves on dolphins' backs in triumph ride.[1]

There is certainly a suggestion here of the permanently frustrated lust of Keats's 'Grecian Urn'. A line like,

'His flatt'ring tongue licking her bare white knee'

has an unusually direct senuousness for its period, while:

' . . . . Echo heard the sound,
And bade the wandering hills and woods repeat'.

manages to use heavy caesura and enjambement without catching the numbing Miltonic register.

The last ec logue, 'The Wish', is like a plan for the retreat to Nether Stowey or Dove Cottage, though with the homosocial undertones of the neo-Classical mood:

1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.34.

I would wish to pass my peaceful days,in rural solitude, under my rustic roof, alike removed from fame and envy. Beneath the shade of spreading walnut trees I'd chuse a lonely house.···Before my door, within a little court, fenced by a quick-set hedge, a limpid fountain should flow murmuring from an honey suckle bower. In its stream should the tame duck play with her young brood ·····

There would I often retire from the scorching heat of noon, and look at my sun burnt gardener, turning up the earth, to sow the wholesome herbs. Sometimes, excited by the hardness of his labour, I would take the spade from his hand and apply it to turn up the earth, while he, standing idle by my side, might laugh at my want of strength. Sometimes I would assist him to bind up the bending stalks of plants to poles, or trunks of trees; or else to prop the rose-trees, pinks and lilies.[1]

Exactly the same engaging mood of professional aestheticism and amateur agriculture runs in Coleridge's letter of January 1797 to John Prior Eslin:

Our house is better than we expected - there is a comfortable bedroom and sitting room for C.Lloyd, and another for us - a room for Nanny, a kitchen, and outhouse. Before our door a clear brook runs of very soft water; and in the back yard is a nice Well of fine spring water. We have a very pretty garden, and large enough to find us vegetables and employment. And I am already an expert Gardener - and both my hands can exhibit a callum, as testimonials of their industry. We have likewise a sweet Orchard...so that,you see,I ought to be happy - and thank God, I am so.[2]

1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), pp.96-8.
2. Letters of S.T. Coleridge, edited by E.L. Griggs, 8 vols. (Oxford, 1956), i,301.

> I would wish to pass my peaceful days,in rural solitude, under my rustic roof, alike removed from fame and envy. Beneath the shade of spreading walnut trees I'd chuse a lonely house.···Before my door, within a little court, fenced by a quick-set hedge, a limpid fountain should flow murmuring from an honey suckle bower. In its stream should the tame duck play with her young brood .....
>
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1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), pp.96-8.
2. Letters of S.T. Coleridge, edited by E.L. Griggs, 8 vols. (Oxford, 1956), i,301.

the interesting question being: why, in that dark cottage, entangled with spades, should Coleridge have thought he 'ought to be happy'?

The general tone of the twenty two Idyls in Rural Poems is one of moral improvement interwoven with innocent lust. If a young shepherd loses two of his goats a shepherdess is prompt to give him two of her own and 'for joy let fall a tear, that she the unhappy shepherd had relieved'.[1] Myrtillis muses happily over his sleeping father and vows that when the old man is dead 'close by thy tomb an altar will I raise, and ev'ry blest occasion life may yield to sooth the wretched and relieve the oppress'd; on that good day,my father, will I pour, in rich libation, milk upon thy grave and strew it round with flowers'.[2] Chloe sings of how she last saw her beloved Lycas: 'Slumbering, beneath the greenwood shade he lay; how beautiful! Within his floating curls the Zephyrs play'd;while through the broad, green leaves the sun beams threw their sportive light. O, I see him still; the trembling shadows of the waving leaves moving about upon his lovely face: still in his sleep methinks I see him smile; th' effect of pleasing dreams. I ran to gather flowers, and softly placed a chaplet round his shining hair'.[3] It was possibly the combination of overt paganism with social justice and sexual promise which made the Idyls so lastingly popular.

Rousseau had given the poems his blessing. The Literary Magazine and British Review[4] recorded his words, on receiving a translation[5]: 'I was

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1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.12.
2. Ibid. p.14.
3. Ibid. p.55.
4. For 1789, volume 2, p.241. Many of these references are taken from Bertha Reed's The influence of Solomon Gessner upon English Literature (Philadelphia, 1905), a most helpful study but one curiously indifferent to the English form of the translations.
5. From a letter, dated 24th December 1761, from Rousseau to Huber.

in the most dreadful pain of body when I received your Idyls. After having read your letters, I opened the book, as it were, mechanically, concluding I should immediately shut it again, but I did not shut it till I had read it quite through and placed it by me, that I might read again....I am much obliged to you for having freed our language from that foolish and ridiculous jargon which deprives images of truth and sentiment of loveliness'. So Rousseau's first reaction was to the stylistic innovation of the Idyls. In the first English review of Rural Poems, the Monthly Review concentrated an immediate suspicious attention upon the form, not the content, of the Idyls:

> Poetical imagery without the certain distinctions of measure, can no more entitle any work to the apellation of a poem than a number of features, scattered without order or composition, can be called a picture. Neither, in our opinion, can the author of such pieces have any more right to the title of a poet than the designer of such features hath to the character of a painter.[1]

The Critical Review, a periodical of equal prestige, gave the Rural Poems six very generous pages[2] of quotation and comment. It concluded 'upon the whole, there is something so original, new, and pleasing in these elegant poems as sufficiently evince that genius is confined to no country and that Germany can produce poets as well as Great Britain, France, or Italy'. It is surprising how readily the reviewer awards the terms 'poems' and 'poets' while calmly accepting: 'M. Gesner has even rejected rhime and measured verse', 'M. Gesner rejects every kind of verse'. It seems that 'the harmony of his periods, the conciseness, the elegance, and simplicity of stile' quite compensated for the lack of form.

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1. Monthly Review (1762), xxvii, p.129.
2. Critical Review (1762), xiv, p.21-26.

The Critical Review did not tackle the question of Gessner's closeness to 'Nature'. The Monthly Review was more intellectually rigorous, and in its critical response to a passage from 'Milo' it seems to be making a very significant complaint about English poetry in general, based on a minor lapse in Gessner's writing. The passage runs:

> See how the foaming wave descends the rock,
> Watering the cresses, flowers and benty grass,
> As on it flows into the lake below,
> O'erhung by willows and thick growth of reeds.
> By silent moonshine, here the sportive Nymphs
> Dance to my flute, while skipping Fauns around,
> Clapping their clattering castanets, keep time.
> See how the hazels, forming alleys green,
> In slender stems surround my shaded cot!
> How the ripe black-berries, with their glossy hue,
> Mixt with the lively red of sweet-briar grow.
> See how the apple trees, stuck round with vines
> Bend down with fruit.[1]

This compares reasonably with the much better known 'Song of the Second Minstrel' in Chatterton's Aella (1769). Though the composition is ideal the trimmings are realised, and the verse accepts the discipline of the iambic pentameters without ever being trapped by them. But this was not enough for The Monthly Review. After grumbling about the profusion of detail it continued:

> Imagery is the very soul of poetry, but it may be too complex and ornate. When images are multiplied, every particular object loses the effect it would have had when considered simply. Our modern poets seem unapprized of this truth.[2]

Gessner's comparative directness seems to have fired the reviewer to demand even greater simplicity: a very neo-Classical response. When

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1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.5.
2. Monthly Review (1762), xxvii, p.129.

Winter is the subject, as in the Idyl 'Daphnis,' a native Swiss realism limits Gessner's composition and may have satisfied this demand for austerity:

> The fields forsaken, hear the lowing herds and bleating flocks, shut up in warmer stalls, exult o'er winter's cold; even scarse the footsteps of the docile ox, who draws our winter's firing from the woods, near to the threshold of his home,we trace. The birds have left the woods; save here and there a solitary titmouse, singing still, in spite of pain and cold.[1]

In the last Idyl,'The Wish,' Gessner included an apostrophe to his Swiss masters and friends, perhaps the earliest mention of this literary school in English translation. Klopstock 'creative genius', Bodmer, Breitinger, Wieland,'whose muse did often visit her sage sister, Philosophy', Kleist and Gleim are all mentioned and a footnote[2] assured the reader that these are 'German poets, of the first reputation'.

This, then, is the style and character of Rural Poems.

What is happening is that descriptive language is ridding itself of mannerism but, tied to a foreign source, is failing to describe real scenery in a definite locality. It would have seemed reasonable to expect a Wordsworth in 1772 rather than 1798. Instead there would be twenty unexciting years of Collins's mellifluous imprecision and Cowper's cautious refinements. Probably the technical accuracy of Gilbert White's observation of his Hampshire village would be more enriching to the future poets than Cowper's nervous

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1. M. Gesner, Rural Poems (London, 1762), p.11.
2. Ibid. p.104

care. Meanwhile the translator of Rural Poems seems to be reaching towards White's vocabulary of green hellebores, ragwort and groundsel while cutting back the unhelpful epithets. Where would Wordsworth 'the naked savage' have been after his mill race, if all he could have rolled in had been violets?

It is a sign of the experimental excitement of these early 1760s that there was an exactly contemporary, independent analysis of free verse in a lively critical book also published in 1762. Its title is a book in itself: Occasional Thoughts on the study and character of Classical Authors, on the Course of Literature, and the present plan of a Learned Education with some incidental comparisons between Homer and Ossian.

The book is anonymous but attributed in the catalogue of the Bodleian Library, Oxford to John Gordon DD Archdeacon of Lincoln. He was in fierce rebellion against an education by studying the classics. Classical authors, he believed, 'do not show a due regard to nature'. Yet he was, in fact, taking very much the same lines on style as Gessner, though without Gessner's reverence for older models:

'If then the poets of old did really look at nature, with what other view could they do this, than for the sake of laying in materials to dress her up in some strange shape or other? Whence otherwise could they have got their Centaurs, Cyclops, Giants &c&c&c? Whenever they attempt to describe any natural object, what hideous disfiguring do they by this means make of it? I would ask anyone who has seen the morning, (or indeed, who has not) what idea of it a rosy-finger'd Lady, like Daphne sprouting into a laurel, conveys to his imagination?

How differently does the person, who draws from nature, paint her beauties?

'Look what STREAKS

Do lace the SEVERING CLOUDS in yonder East!'

everyone who understands these words must acknowledge this to be a true picture which brings at once the object full to his view.'[1]

So he was very conscious that words need to convey pictures and very often quite fail to do this. His hero was Ossian. He seemed to have little doubt that Ossian was a fake: 'if to make people relish this delicious repast, it was necessary to persuade them, that it was prepared some hundred years ago; what can they so properly blame for this, as their own absurd humour, which requires thus to be cheated into pleasure?'[2] But this did not worry him in the slightest because Ossian looked directly at nature and wrote about it as it was:

> 'Over the green hill flies the inconstant sun', - A painter might draw from hence - But what painting could represent that sudden succession of light and shade which is conveyed to the mind in the last period. Ossian sees real horses and uses real words to convey them: 'The high maned, broad-breasted, proud, high leaping, strong steed of the hill, loud and resounding in his hoof; the spreading of his mane is like that stream of smoak on the heath'... Homer's two mares might pass for Venus's doves or two tame pigeons.[3]

His literary stance was brusque, intelligent and very much of the early 1760s: 'I should like to see Homer translated in the same prosaic manner, that is at least without the help of rhymes and other additions, and the two contrasted together.'[4] So he was plainly part of that aesthetic movement which demanded Cowper's neo-Classical translation of The Iliad

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1. Occasional Thoughts (London, 1762), p.76.
2. Ibid, p.111.
3. Ibid, pp.96,97,98.
4. Ibid, p.109.

to correct Pope's version; his views, therefore, on free verse at this particular time are of interest: 'the truth is that poetry was as certainly prior to the art of versifying as reason was to the making of syllogisms'. He compares poetry making by rule to men performing tricks with their hands and feet tied up:

> Who ever thought of complaining that the sublime passages we meet with throughout the Bible were not in metre?.....as neither music nor harmony is occasioned by bars or beats in music, which are only assistances to the performers, so neither can it be in poetry..... what should hinder the poet from making a free and promiscuous use of all the various feet and measures as they happened best to suit his present purpose, provided only he was properly attentive to please the ear and satisfy the judgement? By which means poetry would be, what indeed it only naturally can be, a pleasing and harmonious modulation of numbers of sounds, without any fixt or regular returns.....as to the writing or printing poetry in his lines of a particular length, no one, but he who takes his ideas of music from his eyes rather than from his ears, can think it at all material.
>
> Upon such a plan does the measure of Ossian's poems seem to be regulated. There is the greatest attention paid in them to the spirit of harmony, without confining it to certain bounds. Could the genius of Handel desire a finer verse for his purpose than this.....
>
> 'Son of night retire: call thy winds and fly!'[1]

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1. Occasional Thoughts (London, 1762), pp.112,113,116,117,118.

This obscure but eminently lively book has been quoted at length to show that the translations from the German of this sharply limited period in the early 1760s are by no means isolated in their deep involvement with the problem of form and the stylistic efficiency of visual writing. It is a period of real progress: revolution by edecticism, part bogus Celtic, part genuine German.

The next two translations of Gessner continued to refine this rather bloodless simplicity of diction. Both were advances and deserve consideration but they were several leaps of years ahead and were published after J.J. Winckelmann's advocacy of Hellenism had been translated into English. The next translation from the German in sequence was Robert Lloyd's version of Klopstock's Death of Adam, published in 1763.

This is a play, though it was never performed. Its blank verse owes much to Milton and it only achieved two editions.[1] Stylistically it is subdued after the prose-verse excitements of Gessner. The most interesting feature of the book was its Preface.

Lloyd showed an acute, yet critical, awareness of things Grecian and made it clear that he looked to Germany for the best modern versions of the Greek theatre. After a slighting reference to an English version of 'Medea' by 'the celebrated Mr Glover', whom he compared to Quinbus Flestrin, the poet of Lilliput, he claimed that 'the sublime and pathetic' Klopstock has actually improved on the Ancients, 'and has written....not according to the letter, but the spirit of those great originals.'[2]

Since the translation was never a popular success, too much significance must not be laid upon it, but it is interesting to find such reverence for a German at this period and important to have yet another witness to

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1. There was a second publication (Chester, 1791) when interest in Germany flared up again.
2. F.G. Klopstock, The Death of Adam (London, 1763), p.iii. Translated by Robert Lloyd.

the growing awareness of the essence of neo-Classicism - 'The characteristic of the antients is simplicity'[1]

After a close comparison between the way in which Sophocles's Oedipus and Klopstock's Adam heard the news of their approaching death and coped with their unnatural sons, Lloyd declared loyally, 'the German poet is every way equal to his model, and proves the strength of his invention, even while we perceive his imitation.'[2]

Disappointingly the description of a rustic wedding feast which opens the play owes nothing to the new simplicities of the Gessner translations. It is wholly Miltonic in its inversions:

> To view the labours of the virgin train
> Which deck my bridal bower our Mother Eve
> Hastes all delighted, and with hand maternal
> Entwines the clust'ring foliage.[3] . . .

and the play proceeds with much declaration and little imagery. In marked contrast to the Angels of The Death of Cain, Klopstock's Angel is all Horror and Burkean sublime. Though his reputation in Germany seems always to have stood higher than Gessner's, Klopstock has less to offer the progress of English letters at this juncture. What English literature needed was a register to convey homely simplicity, not the inspiration for another version of Samson Agonistes.

The work left one echo, years later, in P.H. Maty's New Review for 1782, volume 1. Maty himself, Secretary to the Royal Society and Under Librarian at the British Museum, was very pro-German, and his magazine in the four

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1. F.G. Klopstock The Death of Adam (London, 1763), p.iii. Translated by Robert Lloyd.
2. Klopstock, Death of Adam (London, 1763), p.viii.
3. Ibid, p.1.

years 1782-86 of its existence achieved an impressive international coverage with translations and notices of literature and scientific writing all over Europe. He concluded a discussion of awful things in simple language, which arose from Genlis's 'Letters of Education' with this recommendation:

> But the first conglomeration, or aggregation (if I may be allowed these portentious words) of sublime and tender imagery within a short space, is in Klopstocks 'Adam', translated about twenty years ago (I believe by the unfortunate Bob Lloyd) but not sufficiently noticed'.

He praises the grouping of Adam's family at the end:

> ....on the borders of the grave dug by his own hands, near the altar reared to Abel - at the shaking of the great rock - before the setting sun has reached the wood of the cedars - I am sure I am right here, for I cried over it twenty years ago, I cried over it yesterday, and I am persuaded that the descendants of the first parent will cry over it, thro' many a race, till
>
> One greater man
> Redeem them and regain the blissful seat.[1]

Maty's memory had served him accurately and it is useful to be reminded of the gap between the eighteenth century sensibility and modern appreciation. A present day reader finds only a taut Greek austerity of form and a blindness to image; yet to an informed and sophisticated eighteenth century reader like Maty the play lived through its sympathy and sentiment. The disciplined structure was only a vehicle for pathos and religiosity, qualities a modern reader underplays.

Klopstock's other work translated into English, The Messiah, was blighted by Joseph Collyer's version of the first sixteen books which

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1. P.H. Maty, New Review, 9 vols. (London, 1762), i, 293.

came out, in one edition only, in the same year as Adam, 1763. Mrs. Collyer had died of a 'lingering illness, occasion'd by the agitations of mind she suffer'd in writing the former work'. (The Death of Abel). Probably her husband hoped that there was money to be made in a sequel. He failed to notice that The Messiah had no source of human tears, neither did it permit excursions into Arcadia. When he hailed Klopstock as 'the Milton of Germany', he had summed up his unimportance as an influence in England.

It is worth quoting a passage of Joseph Collyer's leaden, pretentious prose:

> The Seraph enter'd the borders of the celestial world, whose whole extent is surrounded by suns, which, as an etherial curtain of interwoven light, extend their lustre around Heaven. No dark planet approaches the refulgent blaze. Clouded nature flies swiftly by, far distant. There the terrestrial orbs seem to roll minute and imperceptible, as the dust, the habitation of worms, is seen to rise from under the foot of the traveller. Around Heaven are a thousand paths of extent immeasurable, also border'd by suns.[1]

This illustrates how important it was for a translator of a German work to be sensitive to the style of the original and reshape his or her English version into some kind of reflective response. Neither Ann Penny nor Joseph Collyer made this response and their translations were without influence.[2] By contrast even Mrs. Collyer's rambling prose-verse has some kind of life, a heightened register of occasional freshness, it at least suggests an alien origin; while the translator of Rural Poems

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1. Klopstock The Messiah (London, 1763), p.13, translated by Joseph Collyer.
2. Blake read The Messiah and summed its God up as 'Nobodaddy' in a brief, scatological poem.

by fidelity combined with 'harmony' of periods breaks a new ground.

Bodmer's Noah was also translated by Joseph Collyer, in 1767. Neither The Messiah nor Noah had any of the impact of Gessner's books. The chaste simplicity of shepherd's feasts could be read as a manifesto of the 'Revolutionary Classicism' of the period, the next two Gessner translations both carry an elusive hint of radicalism; but turgid talk in Heaven was a mere hangover from the seventeenth century.[1] By the end of 1763 the time was ready for a scholarly and lyrical eulogy of Hellenistic aesthetics.

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1. Coleridge had little time for Klopstock, his letter of 13 July 1802 mentions 'the malicious Motto, which I have written on the first page of Klopstock's Messias -

   TALE TUUMCARMEN NOBIS, DIVINE POETA,
   QUALE SOPOR!

Only I would have the words, DIVINE POETA translated,- 'verse making Divine'. I read a great deal of German;but I do dearly dearly dearly love my own Countrymen of old times, and those of my contemporaries who write in their spirit'. Letters of S.T. Coleridge, edited by E.L. Griggs, 8 vols. (Oxford, 1956), ii, 811.

CHAPTER TWO

Fuseli's Mission and the Winckelmann Translations 1763-

That two works of Gessner and two of Klopstock should have been translated into English between 1761 and 1763 suggests that there may have been a directing mind and purpose behind the publications, but nothing can be proved. It is more than likely that the English were merely imitating the French in this interest in German literature.

Late in 1763, however, John Henry Fuseli was sent to London by a group of Swiss and Prussian intellectuals deliberately to foster Anglo-German literary relations. This is not speculation. The account of Fuseli in The Monthly Mirror for January 1801 was based on a personal interview with Fuseli himself and was thus virtually an authenticated biography. It stated: 'He was selected by Sulzer as a person highly qualified for the prosecution of a design which he had formed, in conjunction with Bodmer and other literary characters of Switzerland, of opening a channel of communication between the literature of that country and England'.[1] The Memoir of Henry Fuseli[2], a pamphlet published soon after his death, uses almost exactly the same words, and Knowles's Life of Henry Fuseli states precisely:

> The cause of Fuseli's return to the capital (Berlin) was that, at this time, some of the literati of Germany and Switzerland had it in contemplation to establish a regular channel of literary communication between those countries and England. Fuseli's tutors and friends, Bodmer, Breitinger and Sulzer, felt a lively interest in this project and took an active part in carrying the design into execution. These

1. The Monthly Mirror, IX (London, 1801), p.6.
2. Bodleian Library Catalogue reference: Memoir of Henry Fuseli (London, no date)

> philosophers thought that there was no person better qualified than Fuseli to conduct the business.[1]

So Fuseli was a carefully aimed ambassador of Swiss cultural nationalism. His embassy was one of extraordinary length: sixty one years from 1764 until his death in 1825, with the eight year interval of his stay in Rome 1770-1778. What is in doubt is whether his mission was successful and whether, in 1770, his tutors and friends would still have considered 'that there was no person better qualified than Fuseli to conduct the business'.

To an extent his own nature and the nature of his mission were at odds. His central function in the 1760s was to be the apostle of Winckelmann to the British; but Winckelmann's gospel was austerity and grandeur; neo-Classicism stood for homely virtues, stoic qualities and uncorrupted simplicity. Fuseli's own literary tastes at this period inclined to an experimental style of effusive wildness. But here there is a double paradox: though Winckelmann admired austerity of form in art, his own real influence in Europe came from the incantatory passages of purple prose with which he described the Farnese Hercules,the Laocoon group and, above all, the Apollo Belvedere. It was these passages of lyrical aestheticism rather than his scholarship which converted Europe to Hellenism, and these passages are far from being stylistically austere, they are emotional and complex. So the paradox is that Fuseli's own nature and style were adapted to translate Winckelmann with some conviction, though only at certain of his key passages.

Nothing about Fuseli's career and influence is simple. His second period in England after 1778 was in a different mood and is better considered in a later chapter; but, to keep to a chronological discipline, his work in popularising Winckelmann needs to be considered here as much of it

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1. J. Knowles, The life and writings of Henry Fuseli,2 vols. (London, 1831), i, p.26.

precedes the later, more purely neo-Classical, translations of Gessner and it may, therefore, have influenced them.

Even in his early Swiss years Fuseli, (born Johann Heinrich Füssli, he did not change his surname to Fuseli until his Rome period in the 1700s) veered between painting and writing. There is a folio of his drawings, done when he was a child, in the Zurich Kunsthaus. Most of them are violent in theme; and before he left Zurich he had translated Macbeth into German. The major influence upon him in Zurich was Bodmer, himself an early source of inspiration to the Sturm und Drang movement. Bodmer had been influenced by Addison's Spectator essays on Shakespeare, by Milton's Paradise Lost, by the emotional tone of Young's poetry and by Shaftesbury's exaltation of the artist's creative genius. Homer interested Bodmer greatly, he had translated Blackwell's Enquiry into the life and writings of Homer[1], and, in quest of a native German epic he had rediscovered the Nibelungenlied and the Minnesang. One of Fuseli's first services to Bodmer when he reached England was to send his old master a copy of Percy's Reliques, which Bodmer translated into German. This last is worth stressing; the Anglo Swiss interchange was a two way movement.

When Fuseli fled from Zurich, after he had been involved with the publication of a pamphlet attacking a corrupt magistrate, he had already tasted the beginnings of Sturm und Drang on the Continent. His misfortune, and possibly England's, was that he left Europe before the maturity of the Sturm und Drang, so he was never an intelligent interpreter to the British of the more important Sturm und Drang writing. His mood and his prose inclination in this last year before he came to England can be judged by a translation of a letter which he wrote to J.K. Lavater. Lavater

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1. Thomas Blackwell, An Enquiry into the life and writings of Homer, (London, 1735). Blackwell, a Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, influenced Macpherson.

was his soul-mate and had shared his recent exile when they had both stayed with Provost Spalding in Barth. The letter ran:

> Beloved of my soul, how I love you! How I kiss you! My God, My God! when shall I see you again, when shall I once more lay my hand in your hand, my breast against your breast, against that truest of all hearts, and be in bliss - a life such as you deserve of me shall at least make me worthy of it, I cannot go on - (Erasures)[1]

and four weeks later:

> But my brain catches fire, I grow too excited, I must stop here - O you who sleep alone now - dream of me - O that my soul might meet with yours, as through the lattice the hand of the Shulamite met with her dew-drenched beloved.[2]

while the rhythmical prose of Fuseli's Klagen, a title suggested by the Complaints in Young's Night Thoughts runs:

> Yet were you then once more in my arms, my Lavater! ... It was decided! Then I sank upon your countenance! Then I laid my hand upon your bared, softly-beating heart - and with uplifted glistening eye swore upon that altar, by the tranquility poured down upon you in each gentle breath, by the life you had led all those years without occasion for remorse, by all things still to come, that I would be like you![3]

These three passages of Fuseli's early writing in German point clearly to what was to be both an asset and a handicap to him in his English literary and artistic career: he was, in words and images if not in physical fact, a highly emotional bisexual. It was this that made him, when he had improved his command of English, an ideal translator of Winckelmann.

Winckelmann was a homosexual and it was the physical intensity of attraction surging through a few uninhibited prose poems that made his advocacy of Greek art so startling and seductive to the rich aesthetes

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1. Letter to Lavater, 16th October 1763, translated by Eudo Mason, The Mind of Henry Fuseli (London, 1951), p.97.
2. Eudo Mason, The Mind of Henry Fuseli (London, 1951). p.97.
3. Ibid, p.100.

of Europe. The passages quoted above suggest that, where an English or Scottish translator of normal emotional disposition, faced with a page long eulogy of marble male nudes would hesitate and resort to embarrassed précis, Fuseli would be completely unabashed. In fact that proved exactly to be the case.

Though he is a favoured figure of modern art historians, no one accords Winckelmann much originality of thought. He was, after all, a Platonist after several centuries of Platonism, but he is eagerly recognised as an original aesthete and an infectious enthusiast, a man of feeling ready to use the rapturous rhetoric of his pen in the cause of popularising art objects.

For the present century he has autobiographical advantages working in his favour. His life was naturally dramatic: Ibsen-like in the way his love destroyed him at the perfect moment. He was poor, Prussian and a pederast. He changed his faith to win a place in Italian sunshine, and he confessed his homosexuality to Casanova, that best of publicists. Awarded three gold medals by Maria Theresa,he was stabbed to death for them by a handsome young scoundrel called Arcangeli.

In the 1760s none of this could have done him anything but harm. His advantage then was that he was advocating Greece at just the time when Europe was tiring of Rome and when the decline of Turkish militancy was making a visit to Greek temples a reasonable, if adventurous, extension to the Grand Tour. Britain was, artistically, better prepared for Winckelmann's Greek enthusiasms than any other European country. After the idiosyncratic Vanbrughian essays in Baroque, the style Winckelmann detested, England under the Whigs had virtually ignored the Rococo and settled for the proportioned austerity of Palladian from 1720 onwards. After thirty years of Augustan Rome there was a tendency for patrons with a Burkean feeling for terror to dabble in the Gothick, but from Roman Palladian it was a

far more logical and respectable step to the purity of rediscovered Greek. The earliest authentic Greek garden temples were going up at Hagley, in the Midlands, in the 1750s, so the 1760s were exactly the right time for Winckelmann.

There is some confusion over just which of his fairly limited publications were essentially influential. His two 'major' in the sense 'lengthy', works were Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke, which he published in 1755, a year before Burke's essay On the Sublime and the Beautiful, and Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums, published in 1764. Because the last of these is more encyclopaedically thorough, ranging slowly through Egyptian, Greek and Etruscan art, it is usually referred to as the more important. This is probably not true. The Gedanken is far more crisply controversial and quotable than the Geschichte and it is no accident that the Gedanken was published in translation in London, 1765, April, as Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks, this was Fuseli's work, and in Glasgow, 1766, as Reflections concerning the Imitation of the Grecian Artists in Painting and Sculpture 'in a series of letters'. This was anonymous. The weightier Geschichte, though translated into French in 1766, was not translated into an English book until an American G.H. Lodge translated the Greek Art section, Boston 1849, and the complete work, Boston 1880.

But the writings of Winckelmann which are always noted, and quoted again and again, are the great set piece responses to three ancient statues or statue groups: the Hercules torso, the Laocoon and, supremely, the Apollo in Belvedere, and while these statues are often mentioned and praised in his two major works the full and influential prose-poems occur in two much shorter essays. Without the aesthetic support of these passages, with their almost devout fervour, the religion of 'beauty is truth, truth beauty' could never have grown solely from the assertive, indeed repetitive, Gedanken and Geschichte. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the lines on the

Apollo in Belvedere are a new application of prose style:

> An eternal springtime, like that which reigns in the happy fields of Elysium, clothes his body with the charms of youth and softly shines on the proud structure of his limbs ... Like the soft tendrils of the vine his beautiful hair flows round his head, as if gently brushed by the breath of zephyr. It seems to be perfumed by the essence of the gods and tied with charming care by the hands of the Graces. In the presence of this miracle of art I forget the whole universe and my soul acquires a loftiness appropriate to its dignity. From admiration I pass to ecstasy.[1]

Aesthetics have tended to be at the service of religion, but at this point they are beginning to usurp divinity itself. It is not Apollo who is being worshipped nor a young man who is being sexually admired. The marble is ideal beauty itself and therefore God visible. Winckelmann's particular application of Platonism makes this inevitable.

Unfortunately the passage quoted above is modern. Hugh Honour translated it himself because he knew that it was central to the development of the neo-Classical spirit in the eighteenth century. The reason why he did not quote it from a contemporary English source is that in Fuseli's translation of the Gedanken, Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks, the praise of the Apollo is a brief stumbling fragment:

> In the face of Apollo pride exerts itself chiefly in the chin and nether lip; anger in the nostrils; and contempt in the opening mouth; the graces inhabit the rest of his divine head, and unruffled beauty, like the sun, streams athwart the passions.[2]

and barely grammatical. This, with the clumsy didactic prose of the remainder of the translation, would convert no one. Obviously Honour was so dissatisfied with what he found that he was forced to translate it suasively himself. Similarly in his Greek Revival, J. Mordaunt Crook perceptively claims

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1. Hugh Honour, Neo-classicism (London, 1968), p.60.
2. J.J. Winckelmann, Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks (London, 1765), p.255.

Winckelmann as an enormous influence behind Byron, Keats, Shelley and Landor but, aware of Winckelmann's meagre recorded history of publication in English, is lost as to how this influence was passed on: 'slowly Winckelmann seems to have penetrated the consciousness of every Englishman with any pretensions to classical taste,[1]' he writes, which is unsatisfactory.

At a shallow, though significant, popular level the Greek ideal of simple, beautiful people worshipping Nature at the shrines of classical gods and goddesses was spread by Gessner in translation. But Winckelmann himself had a satisfactory publishing history in translation, which Honour and Mordaunt Crook seem to have missed because much of it is to be found in newspapers and periodicals.

Even the generally accepted fact that Fuseli was first in this field with his 1765 translation of the Gedanken is untrue. The slightly shorter translation which was published, in far more correct English, in Glasgow in 1766 had already appeared in parts of the bi-weekly London Chronicle between 11 December 1764 and 16 February 1765. The only indication of its authorship was the introductory.

> The following elegant and ingenious remarks are privately attributed to the celebrated Abbe Win kelman (Sic), director of the cabinet of Cardinal Alexander Albini; and were communicated to us by a friend of approved taste and literature, now resident at Rome.[2]

Exactly the same translation, still anonymous, was reprinted, this time in monthly parts, in The Scots Magazine, at that time the leading Edinburgh periodical, between January 1765 and July 1765[3]. This double publication in London and Edinburgh, the first completed some months before Fuseli's translation appeared, puts his lumbering version into a reduced

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1. J. Mordaunt Crook, The Greek Revival (London, 1972) p.26.
2. London Chronicle, XVI (December, 1764), p.564
3. The Scots Magazine , XXVII (1765), p.17,74,124,192,233,289,345.

perspective of influence.

The effect upon Fuseli of the three December parts of the Reflections in the London Chronicle, can only be guessed.

He had been in London almost exactly a year himself, having been sent there 'to establish a regular channel of literary communication' between Germany and Switzerland and England. Despite meeting most living figures of literary importance he had achieved nothing concrete. If he had hoped to translate friends like Bodmer and Klopstock into English he must have been disappointed to find that, after Mrs. Collyer's death, it seemed to have descended as a natural right to her husband to translate Klopstock's Messiah in 1763 and Bodmer's Noah in 1767. The Messiah version must have been particularly galling to Fuseli because he was still at that time an admirer of Klopstock, and Collyer's translation was very poor. He was working on a History of German Literature, which was burnt in the fire at Joseph Johnson's house in 1769, but his own, still limited, command of English was probably delaying this. Through his close family links with Winckelmann he must always have been intended to be the apostle of Winckelmann to the British, but now he had been beaten in that race, just as with Klopstock and Bodmer.

Despite his unidiomatic English he must immediately have begun his own translation of the Reflections because they were published within four months in April 1765, adding for good measure to outdo his rival, 'Instructions for the Connosseur' and 'An Essay on Grace in Works of Art', these also by Winckelmann.

His real riposte to the London Chronicle was even speedier. In the January number of the middle of the road, vaguely populist, periodical The Universal Museum, by no means the most prestigious London monthly, appeared the following:

> A description of a marble Trunk of Hercules, commonly called the Torso of Belvedere. Translated from the German of John Winkelmann, Librarian of the Vatican &c &c By Henry Fussle.[1]

The kind of readership enjoyed by the Universal Museum is suggested by the prefatory: 'We are greatly obliged to our ingenious correspondent for the following piece of foreign literature. It may be proper to inform our country readers, that the subject it relates to is highly esteemed among the lovers of virtu ...' and also by the jocularly introductory 'The Professor speaks thus:' before Fuseli's actual translation text.

This is one of the two essays published by Winckelmann in 1759, Beschreibung des Torso in Belvedere zu Rom and Beschreibung des Apollo im Belvedere, Bibliotek d. schönen Wissenschaften u. Künste. These contain, of course, two of the three great set piece descriptions. What Fuseli was doing, very shrewdly since he must now come second with Winckelmann's cognitive argument, was to become the first to give British readers a taste of the Abbé in his more affective voice. He seems, however, not to have been able to command a very impressive vehicle for the presentation of this.

Even before Fuseli's hurried version of the Reflections came out in April, the London Chronicle was pioneering yet more competitively in neo-Classical polemics.

With the seventh and last letter of its Reflections translation the anonymous writer printed an apology for not having included Winckelmann's account of Michelangelo's method to 'render statues exactly comformable to his models', and continued:

> I propose making amends for this ommission by a compleat edition of these letters ... I shall,moreover,add to this edition Mr. Winkelmann's History of the Rise and Progress of the Fine Arts; as also his learned and judicious letter 'Concerning the Discoveries made at Herculaneum'. As these three excellent Productions are originally written in the

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1. Universal Museum, 1 (1765, January), p.16.

> German Language, an English translation of them must be singularly interesting to those who have a taste for the fine arts, since the German tongue is little understood in Britain.[1]

On 4 April 1765, Winckelmann's Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums, which Honour believes was only 'available in French by 1766'[2], began to appear in parts and continued to do so until the fifth part 9 May 1765. The 4 April edition of the paper looked back with some satisfaction on its concluded series of the Reflections, they:

> have met with, as we are informed, from persons of the most exquisite taste and judgement, a high degree of approbation, and have been translated from our Chronicle into French, by the ingenious and elegant authors of a famous Literary Journal at Paris. (La Gazette Littéraire de l'Europe).
>
> This encourages us to present to the public an ample account of a new work composed in German, by the same excellent author, which, as it is of a historical nature ... will, no doubt, be more universally interesting.[3]

So for once it appears that the English actually translated an important German text before the French and they did not have to rely on Huber's 1766 version. The London Chronicle's cut-down version of the Geschichte was also published from its October 1765 number to its 1765 end of year Appendix by The Scots Magazine soon after it had completed the seven letters of the Gedanken.

When Reflections concerning the Imitation of the Grecian Artists came out in Glasgow the following year as a book it did not include the promised account of Michelangelo's method or the discoveries at Herculaneum. The reduced version of the Geschichte never appeared as a book in English in the eighteenth century but another substantial précis of it appeared in Maty's New Review, Volume 1 (1782).[4]

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1. London Chronicle, XVII (1765), p.172.
2. H. Honour, Neo classicism (London, 1968), p.30.
3. London Chronicle, XVII (1765), p.332.
4. This is sixty pages long in four instalments, beginning on page 19.

The identity of the 'friend of approved taste and literature, now resident at Rome', who so efficiently informed Britain, north and south, of the substance of Winckelmann's theories, would be most interesting; but there are too many candidates for the identification. The fact that this translation was reprinted within a few months in The Scots Magazine and, a year later, published in Glasgow, suggests that it was a Scot. Voltaire said in 1762 'it is from Scotland that we receive rules of taste in all the arts'[1], and there were several Scots who were both painters and antiquarians and close to Winckelmann in Rome at this time. Allan Ramsay 1713-84, Gavin Hamilton 1723-98, James Byres and Colin Morison are all possible authors of the translation. Allan Ramsay is the least likely. David Irwin in Scottish Painters 1700-1900 says of Ramsay: 'He is hostile to the concept of idealisation, the belief that pictorial images are created according to an imaginary idea in the artist's mind'[2], so he was unlikely to be a supporter of Winckelmann's theory on working from the Ideal. Gavin Hamilton is a very likely author as 'he was a decisive influence in the early development of neoclassicism in both the fields of collecting and painting, and was later to influence David, the greatest neoclassical painter of Europe'[3]. The only question, since he was a highly successful painter, receiving as much as £300 for his Achilles lamenting the death of Patroclus, is whether he would have had the time to spread the theory he greatly admired.[4] The likeliest candidate is Colin Morison. He was a close friend of Winckelmann[5]

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1. David and Francina Irwin, Scottish Painters At Home and Abroad 1700-1900 (London, 1975), p.101.
2. Ibid, p.62.
3. Ibid, p.101.
4. When painting his Achilles he wrote to Lord Palmerston 'What puzzles me most is the Achilles, to preserve dignity without extravagance', an obvious fear of parenthyrsis.
5. His letter to Hagedorn, Florenz , 16.11.58 mentions Morison: Mein Scottlander heist Morison, ist aus Edinburg, ein Schüler vom Blackwall (sic), der eins der schönsten Bücher in der Welt 'Enquiry in the life and writings of Homer' geschrieben hat. Er ist 5 jahre in Rom dann den Homer lesen, und zeichnet ziemlich. Briefe edited by Walther Rehm, 4 vols. (1952), i,435.

and having been a student of Thomas Blackwell at Kings College Aberdeen, where Blackwell was a professor, he had studied under the man whose Homer Winckelmann greatly admired. Morison's career as a painter was cut short by a gunshot wound, whereupon he became an antiquarian and a guide, so he had the time and probably the need for money to dabble in writing work. He had studied under Mengs the painter who carried out the famous trick on Winckelmann by painting a picture of tipsy Zeus kissing an epicene Ganymede and passing it off on the delighted critic as a Roman original.

The selection from Winckelmann's Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums which began in the London Chronicle on 4 April 1765 is only very limited, yet it finds space in the excerpt of 9 May 1765 to relate in full the Ganymede discovery from Winckelmann's point of view. Even in this short account a suspicious reader would have found much to raise his mistrust:

> The two figures are as large as life and the countenance of Ganymede is beautiful beyond all expression. This picture was discovered by a French Chevalier, who called himself Diel de Marsilly and had resided about four years at Rome, he found this picture on the inside of a wall ... these acquisitions were made in a clandestine manner, and as Marsilly died suddenly in the month of August 1761, it is not yet known from whence he drew these previous monuments.[1]

Whether this indicates that the translator was in the secret and knew of Mengs's deception or was as deceived as Winckelmann himself can only be guessed, but the inclusion of the episode suggests a closeness to both men and this would fit Morison.

The unknown translator faded from the Art History scene as quietly as he had entered it; but, rather late in time, as if he had almost forgotten its existence, Fuseli finally brought out a translation of Winckelmann's masterpiece which was almost worthy of it, marked a definite advance in

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1. The London Chronicle, XVII (1765), p.452. This was the last extract from the Geschichte in the Chronicle. There were only five of these so the work does not seem to have aroused the interest occasioned by the compacter and more controversial Gedanken.

his own writing standards from his Reflections and certainly gave the British a feeling of Winckelmann's quality.

This, Description of the Apollo in Belvedere and the Borghese Gladiator, 'from the idea of Abbé Winkelman', was printed in The Universal Museum again, in its February number for 1768.[1] Like its predecessor, the Hercules torso, it had a long Greek epigraph.

This, apart from the Maty summary of the Geschichte, was the last of the modest spate of translations from Winckelmann, though it was by no means the end of the controversy raised by them in the periodicals. The Edinburgh Magazine carried a long and indignant article as late as 1787[2] replying to Winckelmann's attack on the physical characteristics of the northern races. It is time now to consider the character, style and probable impact of the translations in the order of their publication.

The London Chronicle was a mundane setting for the message of Winckelmann. Rather like a compressed bi-weekly Times, it jostled Grecian purity against articles on how to fatten bullocks. 'An account of the Rise and Progress of Information in the King's Bench', 'A new method of treating the Gout', 'Deaths', 'Sold by Auction' and 'Warehouses for Shirts and Irish Cloth'. One of its items always had literary pretentions, such as 'The Battle of the Genii - A Fragment in Three Cantos from an Ancient Erse manuscript' or the serial account which followed Winckelmann on 'The History of Danish Literature'.

In among all these even the level, cautiously written translation of the Reflections appears in the sum of its three December instalments, strangely exotic. The epithet 'sensational' is almost appropriate. The impact of the first letter is contentious, conveying in a few columns three of the book's basic points: that Greece was uniquely favoured by

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1. The Universal Museum, IV (1768, February), p.56.
2. The Edinburgh Magazine, V (1787), pp.69-73.

nature, and its isles remain to the present day a demi-Eden, that ideal beauty, the almost direct imprint of 'the primitive source of eternal beauty'[1] can still be found, as in magical talismans, in the surviving works of Ancient Greece, and lastly that the Ancient Greeks were a race of physical heroes compared with 'a modern beau, a sybarite of our days'[2].

So the great legend of Greece which haunted the Romantics was born, and according to Winckelmann the legend still lived: 'At this very day the Grecian Isles are remarkable for the gracefulness and beauty of their inhabitants .. a strong argument in favour of the transcendent beauty of their ancestors.'[3]

The equally compelling charisma of nude physical beauty begins to build up here in the first letter: 'the young Spartans were obliged, every ten days, to appear stark naked in presence of the Ephori'. In the Second Letter, 18 December 1764 it becomes insistent and unavoidable, tucked away there among the 'Course of Exchange' and the fat stock prices:

> The flower of the youth danced naked at Athens on the public theatres. It was the great Sophocles that gave the first example of this singular spectacle to his fellow citizens, in his youthful days.[4]

The 'sublime' itself, in absolute contrast to the puritanical outlook of Burke, is defined in terms of naked youth,

> ...in those Gymnasia or public places, where the youth, who needed no other veil than the public chastity and purity of manners, performed quite naked their various exercises ... Phidias came to contemplate these living active and animated models, the beautiful graceful and sublime.[5]

and a few lines later it speaks of the 'dignity, truth, grace' of these nudities, then firmly states the frightening conclusion: 'The Soul alone can imprint upon the body the character and expression of Truth'[6] which

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1. The London Chronicle , XVI (1764), p.564.
2-3 London Chronicle, XVI (1764), p.564.
4-6 Ibid, p.588.

means that those ugly in body are likely to be ugly in Soul, beauty being truth, truth beauty.

It hardly needs to be emphasised how this supreme physical snobbery, once liberated and given moral, even religious standing, by Winckelmann has gone ringing down the years to become tacitly accepted by the community of nations.

The source of Wincklemann's confident gospel is apparent, but seems not to have been defined or attacked in his day. In the second Letter there is an almost gloating quality to his fantasy: 'the contours of a vigorous and beautiful body were sometimes visible in the impression which the young wrestlers made upon the sand of the arena'[1]. While the third Letter discourses for twelve lines on the superiority of the ancient sculptor's technique for carving marble testicles on the statues of their ephebes with 'easy and flowing curves or waving lines, which arose out of each other by an imperceptible transition, formed a whole and seemed to be produced by one stroke of the pencil or chisel.'[2]

The clarity of the translation is in accord with the simplicity of the message, and, as the evangelical Christian gospel says 'only believe and you shall be saved' and have power, so Winckelmann told the artist he would be rewarded. Once he had

> acquired an intimate degree of familiarity with the beauties of Grecian statues and formed his taste after the admirable models they exhibit, he may then proceed with advantage and assurance to the imitation of Nature. The idea he had already formed of the perfection of Nature by observing her dispersed beauties combined and collected in the compositions of the ancient artists, will enable him to acquire with facility and to employ with advantage the detached and partial idea of beauty which will be exhibited to his view in a survey of Nature in her actual state. When he discovers these partial beauties, he will be capable of combining them with those perfect forms of beauty with which he is already acquainted.[3]

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1. London Chronicle, XVI (1764). p.588.
2. Ibid, p.613.
3. Reflections (Glasgow, 1766), p.61. Translated anonymously.

But this is such a sweeping formula, so superbly opposed to common sense, that it obviously needs more than these cold sentences to send artists flying off to Rome, poets to Greece and egocentrics to study the general rather than the particular.

Fuseli's version of all this, Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks had, for all its rugged syntax, an equally rugged confidence. Where the anonymous translation reads 'The gentle temperature of a pure mild air and serene atmosphere had, no doubt, a certain influence on the bodily condition of the ancient Grecians'[1], with its genteel reservations; Fuseli blunders in with: 'The forms of the Greeks, prepared to beauty by the influence of the mildest and purest sky, became perfectly elegant by their early exercises'[2]. Obviously one or the other is inaccurate, and 'elegant' was the word choice of a foreigner, but the superlatives tend to carry the day for conviction.

Fuseli attempts also to moderate the overwhelming masculinity of the exemplar with chatty footnotes such as:

> So are the goddesses of the Theopaegnia at Blenheim, in Oxfordshire; and hence it is clear, that another Venus, analogous to that in the Tribuna, among the pictures of a gentleman in London, cannot be the production of that genius-in-flesh only. The daughter of the Idalian graces seems to thrill with inward pleasure and to recollect a night of bliss -
>
> > There is a language in her eye, her cheek, her lip :
> > Nay, her foot speaks.....
> > Shakespeare[3]

and an obscure doctrine is often aided by his obscure language:

> the pitch to which most perfect Nature can elevate herself, when soaring above the senses, will quicken the genius of the artist and shorten his discipleship: he will learn to think and draw with confidence, seeing here the fixed limits of human and divine beauty.[4]

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1. Reflections (Glasgow, 1766), p.11. Translated anonymously.
2. Reflections (London, 1765), p.4. Translated by Fuseli.
3. Ibid, p.263.
4. Ibid, p.19.

where the last phrase is strictly meaningless and the first three clauses are obscure, but the central section has a bluff practicality which discourages quibbling.

Fuseli's English improves towards the end of his translation. Included with the Reflections is a supposed letter from a critic: 'Objectives against the foregoing Reflections', actually forged by Winckelmann himself. In his reply to himself: 'Answer to the foregoing letter', the argument of the ecological sources of fine art is stated far more persuasively and Fuseli's prose carries it well:

> The most temperate seasons reigned through all the year, and the refreshing sea gales fanned the voluptuous islands of the Ionic sea, and the shores of the continent·····Under a sky so temperate, nay balanced between heat and cold, the inhabitants cannot fail of being influenced by both. Fruits grow ripe and mellow, even such as are wild improve their natures; animals thrive well and breed more abundantly. 'Such a sky', says Hippocrates, 'produces not only the most beautiful of men, but harmony between their inclinations and shape'.[1]

Such writing was the perfect complement to Gessner's Idyls, creating for the English mind the legend of a golden age that perhaps still frailly survived, or could,more importantly,be reconstructed. The neo-Classical idyll is often linked to the idea of political liberty and therefore political action. Winckelmann gives the theory for this, just as Gessner gives the examples in his ambitious pastoral novel Daphnis, translated into English in 1768. Fuseli butchers the idea but it just survives:

> Art claims liberty: in vain would nature produce her noblest offspring, in a country where rigid laws would choke her progressive growth, as in Egypt, that pretended parent of sciences and arts: but in Greece, where, from their earliest youth,the happy inhabitants were devoted to mirth and pleasure, where narrow spirited formality never restrained the liberty of manners, the artist enjoyed nature without a veil.[2]

It was no accident that Washington D.C. was a neo-Classical Grecian

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1. Reflections (London, 1765), p.151-52.Translated by Fuseli.
2. Ibid, p.9.

city. Winckelmann's basic point, that nudity is truth, that nature needs no veil is compelling as a symbol and stimulatingly novel in the middle of a particularly artificial and notably 'dressed' century. Everything in Winckelmann is weighted to inculcate a feeling of physical inferiority in those polite western Europeans whose confidence had already been shaken by Rousseau's praise of the noble savage. Winckelmann explicitly makes this link between ancient Greeks and modern savages:

> To be like the God-like Diagoras was the fondest wish of every youth. Behold the swift Indian outstripping in pursuit the hart: how briskly his juices circulate! how flexible, how elastic his nerves and muscles! how easy his whole frame! Thus Homer draws his heroes,[1]

The revolutionary originality of Winckelmann's book is its emotional physicality. Few ages in Europe can have lacked individual admirers of the nude, but now it was being linked by art to truth, liberty and the ideal condition, with a convincing scorn for the prim prudery of the present. It is hard to trace a shift in physical self-awareness. Restoration writers seem at least as sexually aware as Romantic writers, but the physical presence of the writer is much sharper in the later period. Rochester never peddled his person, his image, as Byron did: dieting, posturing and parading in fancy dress his way around Greece, the Greece that Gessner and Winckelmann together had sold to England and Europe. Many of the early travellers to Greece were delighted by the Acropolis but disappointed by the persons of the modern Greeks. It was Winckelmann who had built up their expectations of the noble, nude and antique.

'The most beautiful body of ours would perhaps be as much inferior to the most beautiful Greek one, as Iphicles was to his brother Hercules.'[2] And, four pages later: 'must we not then, considering every advantage which nature bestows, or art teaches, for forming, preserving and improving

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1. Reflections (London, 1765), p.5-6. Translated by Fuseli.
2. Ibid, p.4.

beauty, enjoyed and applied by the Grecians; must we not then confess there is the strongest probability that the beauty of their persons excelled all we can have idea of ?'[1]

He praises with delight every excess of physical vanity: 'Alcibiades, when a boy, refusing to learn to play on the flute, for fear of its discomposing his features, was followed by all the youth of Athens'[2] The details of rubbing with oil, bathing and re-an ointing are accepted as a recipe for demi-divinity: 'a person leaving the bath in this state, appears, says Homer, taller, stronger and similar to the immortal Gods'.[3]

In extraordinarily sharp contrast is Burke's essay on 'The Sublime and Beautiful'[4], written a year later, but appearing, of course,ten years earlier than Winckelmann in English. Burke sets out to prove that all reactions of taste are, in essence, physiological, set up by involuntary spasms of the senses. Yet the actual impact of his book is wholly cerebral, mild, rational and markedly unphysical. Even when Burke discusses 'Proportion not the cause of beauty in the human species' he never mentions nudity. Instead he debates the relation of the human form to architecture or music, and considers whether the perfect body is seven or eight times the length of a human head. Winckelmann wastes not a moment on reason or proof. His is a revealed religion. His book does not persuade, it hypnotises by accepting, without question, attitudes and aesthetics that have been overlaid by fourteen hundred years of established Christianity. 'During certain solemnities the young Spartan maidens danced naked before the young men', he reports gleefully, and then proceeds with provocative irrelevance: 'strange this may seem, but will appear more probable when we consider that the Christians of the primitive church, both men and women, were

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1. Reflections (London, 1765), p.9. Translated by Fuseli.
2. Ibid, p.6-7.
3. Ibid, p.166.
4. Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (London, 1759).

dipped together in the same font.'[1]

Burke reduces beauty to the biology laboratory. Winckelmann hands out a creed: once there was a beautiful land; in it lived beautiful people; study this beauty because it is truth. The claim is potentially enormous. Greek beauty and philosophy are the same; drama and sculpture arise from the same feeling. 'Laocoon suffers, but suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles: we weeping feel his pains, but wish for the hero's strength to support his misery. The expression of so great a soul is beyond the force of mere nature. It was in his own mind the artist was to search for the strength of spirit with which he marked his marble. Greece enjoyed artists and philosophers in the same persons'.[2]

Fuseli's first attempt at one of Winckelmann's set pieces from his essays must have been written before his Reflections. It was published in the January 1765 inaugural number of this new magazine, the Universal Museum.

A description of a marble trunk of Hercules is a thin performance. In fairness to Fuseli, Winckelmann seems not to have given him a great deal to work on, and in fairness to Winckelmann, time did not leave much of the Belvedere Hercules to enthuse over. The fancy of his insights and the rhetoric of his prose both strain. He has only a back and thighs to inspire him: 'the first look will perhaps shew thee nothing but a huge deformed block: but if thou art able to penetrate the mysteries of art, attention will open all her glories to thy eye; thou shalt see Alcides, the hero transfused into the marble'.[3]

What remains of the battered statue is used: 'Consider the thighs, whose fulness informs us that the hero never tottered.....whose never wearied vigour and more than human strength bore the hero through a

1. Reflections (London, 1765), p.11.
2. Ibid, p.31
3. Universal Museum, I (1765, January), p.16.

hundred nations to immortality - But a glance on the back revokes my rambling fancy; there new wonders arise. I look like one who.....'[1] and the sentences ramble away again. According to Winckelmann, even though the head is missing,the poise of the muscular back indicates everything that seems to have been lost:

> learn here how the creative hand of the artist could animate matter. The back bending, as with intense meditation, gives the idea of a head busied with the cheerful remembrance of its astonishing achievements, and with it, as it arises majestic and sage to my awed eye, all the other destroyed parts present themselves before me. An effusion of images pours from what is left.[2]

Winckelmann sees the torso as a perfect, almost abstract example of the central theme of the Reflections: 'The last and most eminent characteristic of the Greek works is a noble simplicity and sedate grandeur in Gesture and Expression. As the bottom of the sea lies peaceful beneath a foaming surface, a great soul lies sedate beneath the strife of passions in Greek figures.'[3] This would have been a much more convincing example to illustrate his idea instead of the Laocoon which he chose almost wilfully, as it is surely nearer to Baroque in feeling and composition than any other famous ancient statue, and it strains even Winckelmann's interpretive skill to maintain that it avoids the deplored quality of parenthyrsis.[4]

With the ruined torso, on the other hand, it is easy to agree with Winckelmann:

> here, not even a hint is left of violence or lascivious love: from

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1. Universal Museum, I (1765, January), p.16.
2. Ibid, p.16.
3. Reflections, (London, 1765), p.30. Translated by Fuseli.
4. Parenthyrsis was virtually the Greek word for Baroque as Winckelmann understood the style:... 'figures whose violence, fire and impetuosity were incompatible with that sedate grandeur of which I have now been speaking were looked upon as defective; and this defect was called parenthyrsis'. Reflections (Glasgow, 1766), p.89. Translated anonymously.

> the calm repose of the parts, the grand and settled soul appears; the man who became the emblem of virtue....This eminent and noble form of perfect nature is, we might say, wrapt up in immortality - of which the shape is but the recipient; a higher spirit seems to have occupied the place of the mortal parts, 'tis no longer that frame which still has monsters to face, and fiends to subdue, 'tis that which on Oeta's brow, purified from the dregs of mortality, has recovered its primitive splendour, the likeness of his supreme father.[1]

It is clear from this passage just what Winckelmann is achieving with this measured but still emotional prose. Primarily, of course, he aims to give lustre to the meagre remains of a civilisation that he believes would have made him happy. The fact that all the statues he describes were Roman copies and not Greek originals does not matter. An art critic does not sell reality so much as himself. It is his personal insight and his world view that is of interest. Winckelmann is developing the role of art critic as aesthetic seer and philosopher, the voice for the inanimate, with all its potency for humbug and inspiration.

And so, a little staled perhaps by anticipation, but with Hugh Honour's version for comparison to test its sophistication, to 'The Apollo in Belvedere' in the Universal Museum of February 1768. The late date is a puzzle; for maximum effect it should have been printed late in 1765, to give emotive substance to the arguments of the Reflections, or it should have been included along with the Reflections. In 1767 Fuseli published, anonymously, and in an edition which was partly destroyed by accidents, his fascinating linguistic experiment with his adopted tongue Remarks on the Writings and Conduct of J.J. Rousseau. Contrary to chronological logic, but because it is emphatically not a work of neo-Classical inspiration, this book will be considered in the later chapter on Fuseli. It was ill reviewed

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1. Universal Museum, I (1765, January), p.18.

when it was noticed at all, so Fuseli is likely to have opted in his own mind somewhere about this time to be a painter and not a writer. The Apollo passage is a piece of art criticism, something in which Fuseli never lost interest. Inexplicably Eudo Mason does not include the Apollo in his anthology of Fuseli's writings.[1] Even if the translation had been garbled it would be important as a proof that the passage was becoming known in English art circles. Even Morgan and Hohlfeld's German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860[2] fails to mention it. David Irwin in his book Winckelmann, Writings on Art also fails to quote the Apollo passage though he mentions it in the Bibliography (p.160). Irwin has missed the earlier Hercules description and all the translations in the London Chronicle.

A long quotation is necessary to illustrate how a German speaker of the early Sturm und Drang is working to create something novel in English writing, with something of the baroque, something of the sentimental, the whole fused with a rhythmic rhetoric which is an echo of Fuseli's earlier 'Complaints' if Eudo Mason's translation of them is accurate.

> Of all the works that escaped the havock of time, the statue of Apollo in Belvedere is the sublimest idea of art. To frame him the artist took no more of matter than what was necessary to make the God appear; such organs human nature knows not, such attitudes no mortal: an eternal Spring, like that of Elysium, blends the grandeur of man with the charm of youth, and rosy beauty wantons all down the godlike system. Roam over the realms of incorporeal grace, invoke angelic nature to conceive his perfection: here sick decay and human flaws dwell not, blood palpitates not here: an empyrean mind, like a flood of light pours through the whole and marks the outline .... Yet there peace dwells in blest tranquility; and the smiles that beam in his eye seem to invite the love-sick muses.....A brow of Jupiter, big with the goddess of wisdom, eyebrows whose nod rules fate; eyes of the queen of Heaven; that mouth which taught Climene pleasure! His liquid hair waves here in ringlets like tendrils kissed by zephyrs, is there gathered in knots by the enamoured graces. He seems to enter a council of gods, who rise in awful haste. Wrapt in astonishment I forget what's around me, and add dignity to contemplation, fancy myself more than man, my breast dilates to adore that which dwells with the spirit of prophecy. Delos rises before me, the Lycian groves, Dodona nod! (sic) but my strength forsakes me, art only can describe what art created: what I wrote of thee, stupendous image, I lay at thy feet, like the wreaths of those who could not reach the head of divinities they come to worship.[3]

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1. Eudo Mason, The Mind of Henry Fuseli (London, 1951).
2. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin (1949).
3. Universal Museum, IV (1768, February), p.56.

Here and there a word is slightly amiss - 'system' and 'stupendous', but a phrase like 'Roam over the realms of incorporeal grace' has an exact feeling for the Abbé's predatory sensuality in its light alliteration and carefully quick abstraction. Romantic enthusiasts best evoke the Classical Gods. They need them to personify their pantheism, and their language revives the old names. Here the reviving process is beginning with a foreign rhetoric and unabashed sensibility. This is the way to

> ".....Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

and Fuseli's magazine item may well be the single most important translation from the German in the whole of the century, a pointer to Keats's Psyche, Tennyson's Oenone and Swinburne's Hymn to Proserpine.

Rhythms and posturings that sound ridiculous when applied to an absent college friend become acceptable and appropriate when addressed to the impersonal stone of a God. The passage is an unrecognised piece of Sturm und Drang writing in English. Apart from the fact that Keats used Haydon's library and Haydon had a copy of Fuseli's Reflections, it is not possible to prove that any of the nineteenth century poets who used Classical nudity to sensuous effect had read Fuseli, or particularly this translation in an obscure magazine of 1768. Almost certainly none of them had done so. All that can be said is that the writing is of real quality and that it may have helped to create a climate of opinion favourable to the Romantic force of Classical symbols.

There is a factual example of the way the Apollo passage was working in the sensibility of English writers after 1768 in A short ramble through some parts of France and Italy, a book which the poet-doctor, John Armstrong published under the pen-name of 'Lancelot Temple', London

1771. Visiting Rome 'Temple' exclaims:

> But the Apollo! - If I were a woman, I should be more in love with the Apollo than as a Man I am with the Venus. For I have seen many women whom I should prefer to the Venus; but never such a beautiful graceful sublime figure of a man as the Apollo is — I have heard sensible people say that a man has nothing to do with beauty - That a man is handsome enough if he does not frighten his Horse is a coarse kind of Proverb. But is Beauty confined to one sex?... Beauty most certainly belongs equally to both sexes ... For it is not a fine complexion, it is not even regularity of features - it is meaning, it is sweetness, sense and spirit that makes Beauty.[1]

Armstrong had recently left Fuseli, after a quarrel in Genoa, but was obviously still a convert to his aesthetic notions. In the last lines he turns hurriedly to abstract qualities, as if uneasy at having admitted that 'beauty most certainly belongs to both sexes', but the admission has been made and the concept is becoming current.

The boldness and uninhibited virtuosity of Fuseli's achievement in the Apollo description is emphasised by the almost embarrassed, and certainly far from lyrical, version of a generally similar passage from the Geschichte which appeared in Maty's New Review in its inaugural volume of 1782. The Maty abbreviation is drawn from Huber's French translation of 1766 and opens with Heine's introduction:

> it is the book upon the subject, that elementary book which the artist and the connoisseur must read over and over again, and which every man of taste, whatever be his profession or pursuit, must have in his study.[2]

The Apollo dithyramb is approached deprecatingly, as if this foreign excess of enthusiasm required an apology:

> Here the Abbé Winckelmann's imagination takes fire (as it frequently does but never unpleasingly) and he gives us a beautiful description

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1. 'Lancelot Temple', A short ramble through some parts of France and Italy (London, 1771), p.34-37.
2. New Review, 1 (1782), p.20. This is actually from the Leipzig 1781 edition. Maty writes of Mr Heine as: 'well known to every scholar in this country, by his admirable editions of Virgil, Pindar and Tibullus.'

> of the Genius of the Villa Borghese. I wish, says he, I was equal to the description of a beauty which has hardly its prototype amongst the children of men. Could the imagination, filled with the simple idea of the beautiful, collected from the consideration of universal nature,and absorbed in the contemplation of that first beauty which comes from God, and returns to him: Could it, I say, thus prepared, represent to itself the apparition of an angel, his face shining with light, and his figure such as may be supposed to have flowed from the first model of all harmony, it would then have an idea of this figure. Such an idea the reader ought to raise of it in his mind; he ought to conceive it as produced by art, with the consent of the Almighty, and on a model taken from an angel.[1]

Not only is this too didactic, with the translator's voice over intrusive, but the whole is heavily Christianised and depaganised in its tone. What Fuseli caught was the Winckelmann trick of identification with the object described; the New Review version achieved almost the opposite, a sense of detachment through reported speech and distancing phrases like 'such as may be supposed'. The whole essence of Winckelmann's Gedanken was involvement. Because the thought of these nude youths and statues excited him intensely he saw them as reflections of the creative spirit and a direct route to inspired art. Because he expressed his internal feelings in the acceptable forms of Platonic philosophy and under the discipline of 'grandeur and simplicity' he was able to publish his astonishingly uninhibited response to physical beauty and have it widely discussed across Western Europe. But it was his passion that carried his theory. As Gibbon wrote: 'He tells me of his feelings, and he tells them with so much feeling that he communicates them.'

It is a fascinating contradiction that Winckelmann, the theorist of the neo-Classical, writes from the heart, while Burke, the theorist of the Gothic Sublime, wrote an essentially cerebral, analytical account of aesthetic response with no attempt to persuade.

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1. New Review, 1 (1782), p. 267-68.

With these 'set piece' responses to classical artefacts Winckelmann was providing examples of a critical approach which would inspire copies. The approach is an essentially subjective one and therefore highly unreliable, depending more on the verbal dexterity of the critic than on historic fact or hard analysis. For this reason Ruskin and Pater seem to be in the line of Winckelmann. Basically the method is that which Keats described as 'negative capability', an unhelpful term as the trick of mind which it describes is essentially positive and generous. It is as applicable to a character in a play or a novel as to a piece of sculpture or a painting. Goethe himself wrote a rather pedantic interpretation of the Laocoon group which was translated as an essay, with an illustration, in the Monthly Magazine 1799.[1] In this the identification was limited to imagining what it would have felt like to be bitten on the buttock by a large python. But Goethe's responses to the characters of Hamlet and Ophelia in Wilhelm Meister are pure examples of the most profitable kind of critical 'negative capability', very closely akin to Winckelmann's reaction to the Apollo, and these also were translated into English periodicals, the Monthly Review 1798 and Monthly Mirror 1799.[2]

This is an exact example of a critical approach developing over a forty three year period and by way of translations from the German.

When Fuseli's translation of the Gedanken appeared in April 1765, the Critical Review gave it a seven page review and the Monthly Review one of five pages. The anonymous Glasgow translation, published as a book in 1766, was barely noticed in the periodicals; so Fuseli's book, much more generously padded out with answer and counter answer, seems to have had more influence. Both reviews, while well filled out with actual quotations, treat Winckelmann with serious critical thought.

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1. Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), pp.349-52, 399-401. See Chapter 8 of this study.
2. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), pp.543-51; Monthly Mirror, VIII (1799), p.151, 237, 296.

The Monthly Review recognised the originality of Winckelmann in its opening paragraph. While there were no anecdotes about ancient art which had not been bandied about by all the critics, 'that profound investigation of their truth and propriety, which is necessary to lead us to the true principles of grace and beauty, on the adoption of which the success of both ancient and modern artists depends'[1] had not as yet been made, but here Winckelmann seemed to be making it. Then followed twenty-two quotations, loosely strung together and designed to emphasise almost every point where Winckelmann treated the subject of nudity. That clearly, for the Monthly was the startling originality of the text. None of Winckelmann's assertions on the superiority of the Greeks and their climate was challenged. A footnote indicated that the earlier, and anonymous, translation of Winckelmann in the form of seven letters rather than a whole book was, strictly speaking, a translation from the Italian and not from the German, Winckelmann having published in two forms and in the two languages.

The Critical Review was much more combative and reserved its praise for its last paragraph. The reviewer seems to have been a man of considerable culture in the classics. After quoting the usual passages about Greek superiority and nudity, he takes issue with Winckelmann's dictum 'that great artists are wisely negligent', using Virgil, Teniers and Hogarth to support his case. This use of Virgil is important as it proves that readers would take Winckelmann's precepts on sculpture as equally applicable to poetry. This writer hotly opposes the use of ideal types of beauty rather than the direct study of nature:

> Our author, however, seems to carry this consequence too far. He reasons in painting as some critics do in poetry, by confining all the beauties of nature to the work of the ancients. May she, or

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1. Monthly Review, XXXII (1765), p.457.

> rather does not she possess some that were unknown to them? Did not Milton and Shakespeare exhibit strokes of genius different from,and even superior to,any we find among the Greek and Latin poets?[1]

The attack is continued by using Quintilian's account of Zeuxis to prove that the ancients erred,just as Michelangelo and Rubens erred in giving women masculine contours. The great Homer, he claims, masculinised his women. Even the central doctrine of 'noble simplicity and sedate grandeur' could be described as 'in fact insensibility and dulness. This disquisition, like several others in this volume, seems more proper for philosophy than painting'[2]. Against Winckelmann's attack on Bernini's rejection of the straight Greek line of nose and forehead he urges that the Abbé 'may find an answer to this, and several of his other observations, in Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty; to which we refer our readers'.[3]

Yet the conclusion, after all this defence of the moderns, is:

> Upon the whole, this book contains the best system of practical criticism upon painting and sculpture of any that has appeared in our or any other language. The author shows himself to be a complete master of his subject.[4]

If this was a contemporary comment it must be a significant one. The Winckelmann translations, in book and periodical,were the literary foundations upon which a hundred country houses, town halls, churches, friezes and alcoved nudes were raised in direct imitation of that golden Greek time, at once pure and yet deeply sensual, which Winckelmann imposed upon the imagination of Europe. The literary parallels to this work in stone and marble would constitute a study in themselves. The whole represents a definite shift in the sensibility of Western Europe; and to this move

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1. Critical Review, XIX (1765), p.447.
2. Ibid, p.448.
3. Ibid, p.449.
4. Ibid, p.449.

in England, from half hearted Rococo to wholesale neo-Classical, Gessner and Winckelmann are keys. It is interesting that the English translations of Gessner preceded those of Winckelmann. This indicates that the appropriate literary mood existed before the aesthetic theory arrived. What is surprising is that England, which had generally resisted Baroque mannerism of forms, should have turned to a German work in translation for its most lastingly popular expression of a neo-classical pastoral in direct and relatively un-mannered language.

CHAPTER THREE

Later translations of the pastoral, 1764-98: the implications of Radicalism

The two central texts for this episode of the growth of neo-Classical influence are Gessner's 'Poetical Pastoral Novel', Daphnis, 1768[1] and his New Idyls, 1776[2], (published again anonymously in the same translation in 1798[3]). But, just as Gessner's popularity, and presumably his influence as a model, extends right through the period of this study and well beyond, so Christoph Martin Wieland 1733-1813, hailed as the supreme figure in German letters in Riesbeck's Travels 1787[4], William Taylor's favourite German writer in the 1790s, and whose Oberon was not translated until 1798, first appeared as early as 1764, when his Trial of Abraham[5] was published in London.

This work, Der gepryfte Abraham was first published in 1753, in Zurich, three years before Gessner's Tod Abels, 1756. Both books combine intense episodes of Biblical passions with pastoral descriptions. If the anonymous translator of The Trial of Abraham had been hoping to repeat The Death of Abel's success in Britain he achieved nothing like the popularity of Gessner's work. But he was noticed five times in the periodicals in 1764 and was republished in Norwich in 1777. This last publication was ignored in the magazines but it is interesting that the provincial city which was to produce William Taylor was prepared to publish a work by Taylor's favourite German author so early.

The Trial of Abraham barely qualifies as a pastoral but it opens

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1. Mr. Gessner, Daphnis a Poetical, Pastoral Novel (London, 1768).
2. Solomon(sic)Gessner New Idyls (London, 1776), translated by W.Hooper, M.D.
3. Solomon(sic) Gessner Idyls or Pastoral Poems (Edinburgh, 1798).
4. Baron Riesbeck, Travels through Germany, 3 Vols. (London, 1787), ii, p.208.
5. The Trial of Abraham, in four Cantos (London, 1764), Anonymous and anonymously translated.

with a shepherd feast and the next four works of Wieland translated into English include three with a definite Greek and neo-Classical character, and these were published in the years when Gessner's New Idyls were most markedly popular in the periodicals. Wieland was, then, involved in the earlier Swiss or neo Classical phase of German influence in England just as his brilliant Oberon (Weimar 1780) was part of the wilder spate of German influence in the 1790's. Taylor of Norwich caught Wieland's chameleon like quality in a review of his collected works in the Monthly Review of 1796:

> Wieland is distinguished for ductility of imagination. His fancy, endowed with intuitive ubiquity, is alike at home in every place and age, and knows how to invest the costume, and to think within the range of ideas appropriate to its peculiar situation. Like the Dervis-friend of Fadlallah, he seems able to shoot his soul into the body of man or woman, libertine or sage, of ancient or modern, of Persian, Greek, or Goth; and, by voluntary metempsychosis, to animate each with characteristic expression. Yet still it is his soul which pierces through every disguise....[1]

The Critical Review of 1764, reviewing The Trial of Abraham, was ignorant even of Wieland's name because of the translation's maladroit presentation. It found the translations 'indifferent' and, as a sign of the new feeling for simple, direct English, advised 'the translator, in his next edition of this work, to substitute some other expressions in the room of the following, viz: ignited, tenebrous, ecstasied, prestiges, inane, umbered, solaceful, lugubrious, emaning, uberous; which however sonorous they may be, are rather affected and unintelligible.'[2] It considered, however, that the original abounds with many striking beauties'.[3]

The Author's Preface, signed, '8 September 1753 Zurich, W', gave at least a hint to British readers that there was a movement of Swiss

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1. Monthly Review, XIX (1796), p.481.
2. Critical Review, XVII (1764), p.184, note.
3. Ibid, p.181.

literature afoot. It hoped that its intensely pietistic observations would 'serve as a preface to the others which some valuable friends of mine and myself are jointly publishing, and thus make known our sentiments and purposes'.[1] By claiming 'to illustrate and recommend morality, to awaken in our readers a sense of religion and a love of virtue ... we most heartily despise a wit void of that beauty which alone is pleasing to the Creator, as soon could we gaze with pleasure on a painted Messalina,'[2] Wieland was recommending both himself and German writing to just that section of British readers which had enjoyed Abel and Idyls. Yet Gessner's writings contain much chastely framed sensuality and Wieland's later works, particularly Agathon and Oberon were often suggestive or openly sensual in their events and descriptions. The pastoral scenes in Abraham already hint at Wieland's blowsy richness of style, though ill served by the translation:

> Festivity soon spreads through all the huts round the afflicted patriarch's tent. In sprightly airs join the voices of useful lips and the sound of harps. Behind the tent, in an alabaster rock, was hewn an elegant bath. Thither two servants led their young master whom they washed, they annointed him with richest nard. He now vests himself with linen robe and a golden girdle encircles his well formed waist.
>
> Thus attired in all the gracefulness of youth and beauty he returns to the tent. So among the flowery vales, through scented air descends the smiling spring. Around her trip the golden hours; and attending Plenty from its full horn profusely pours ex umbrance (sic), the plants and flowers expanding heighten the delightful scene.[3]

The same writer in his Oberon[4], written in 1780 and translated into English in 1798, could still use the pastoral idyll of a simple life which knew no need of money or the corruptions of a later age. Sir Huon, on

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1. The Trial of Abraham (London, 1764), p.ii.
2. Ibid, p.ii.
3. Ibid, p.16.
4. Oberon, a Poem from the German of Wieland by William Sotheby (London, 1798).

his road to Babylon came to

> .....a fertile and well cultured glade,
> Gay interlaced with many a silver rill,
> That danced in sparkling currents down the hill;
> Whitened with flocks, and meads in blooms arrayed;
> And many a hut,beneath the palmy wood
> Of the brown dwellers of the valley stood,
> Poor swains! that gaily work! in want how blest![1]

Here, back in the Golden Age, the knight 'Begs from some shephered wife her simple fare', 'the smiling children with his ringlets play'. But when he casts his purse to them 'the blest race nor gold nor silver knew/Nor hope of recompense their kindness drew.'[2]

So the neo-Classical image survived in writing which had grown so richly descriptive and morally daring that it inspired, as W.W. Beyer has shown in The Enchanted Forest[3], Coleridge's'Christabel', and could include verses as different to that quoted above as the Spenserian:

> In vain her bosom,like twin hills of snow,
> Around whose swell light vapours shadowy play,
> Soft'ning with twilight glint the glare away,
> Gleamed through the gauze that fluttered to and fro;
> In vain her skin was like the glassy stream,
> Where charm'd Aurora views her rosy beam;
> In vain had beauty on each part impresst
> Her glowing seal so visibly confest,
> That dress nor gilds her charms,nor veils their native gleam![4]

This was from an author who had earlier scorned to 'gaze with pleasure on a painted Messalina'. It illustrates how a writer who had been translated from the German under one guise could retain his acceptability yet wholly change his style, role and influence over the period of this study; the Gothic 1790s having direct roots in the biblical,pastoral neo-Classicism

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1. Oberon (London, 1798), p.42, Canto 2.
2. Ibid, p.43.
3. Werner W. Beyer, The Enchanted Forest (Oxford, 1963).
4. Oberon, p.89. William Taylor wrote that it 'studiously avoids the English fault of substituting general terms and allegoric personifications for specific description and individual example'. Monthly Review, XXVI (1798

of the 1760s.

Winckelmann's Reflections in their Fuseli form were republished, with even the Errata page unaltered, in 1767 and an anonymous, one and sixpenny book, An Inquiry into the cause of the extraordinary excellency of Ancient Greece in the Arts (London, 1767) is a further indication of the popularity of Winckelmann's image of Greece.

Gessner's Daphnis, published in 1768, should have set the seal upon this but, inexplicably, it was quite unnoticed in the review columns[1]. Considered critically, it is Gessner's most interesting work in English translation. A pastoral Novel suspended half way between poetry and prose, it has very few English equivalents. It creates and sustains its own unique world of virtue and beauty where almost every action is selfless and goodness is always rewarded. It is supremely optimistic and yet largely erotic in its interest and the sources of its action. Sex, unselfishness and social idealism mingle strangely.

The thread of its plot suffices to hold together, for one hundred and thirty two pages, a chain of Idyls. Daphnis the shepherd loves a shepherdess Phillis, but she is promised to Lamon, another shepherd very rich in flocks. Daphnis is carried away on a flood and meets Aristus the Sage of Croton who has fled the Senate of that city because they 'corrupt the morals of the people, and sacrifice justice and virtue to their own interest'[2]. Aristus and Daphnis's father Amyntas strike up a close friendship; Daphnis marries Phillis after a few gentle mis-understandings. The novel ends with feasting and joy. What is so striking about the book

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1. Apart from the Monthly Review, XXX (1764), p.567, where, after an attack on the 'too florid' style of Huber's French Daphnis, it mentioned that 'an English translation of this piece hath been some time advertised in which we hope to see still greater justice done to this admired Author', further proof of Gessner's association with plain English.
2. Daphnis (London, 1768), p.56.

is that, though the society it describes is out of Theocritus, all its implications are a criticism of contemporary society and it is the clearest example of neo-Classicism as a radical force.

The translator is something of a mystery. The title page says that it is

> By an English Gentleman
> who resided several Years at Hamburgh,

but the Monthly Review of 1793 mentions the translator's name as Charlotte Butler and the Bodleian Library Catalogue also attributes it to her. The conclusion of the 'Prefatory Discourse on the Origin and Use of Pastoral Poetry' tends to support this by its claim that Daphnis 'seems more especially calculated for the amusement and benefit of young people of both sexes; to them therefore, and particularly to young ladies, it is here recommended'.[1]

The book is dedicated to His Royal Highness Prince Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburgh. It has a list of about four hundred Subscribers headed by the Prince of Wales, at that time a young child. This list may explain why it did not press itself into the review columns of the periodicals.

The 'Prefatory Discourse' is determinedly erudite and moral. The pastoral form is traced from Theocritus and the Bible, two of Addison's hymns from the Psalms are quoted in full. There is a digression on the shepherds of Chaldea and Judaea as the earliest astronomers, 'deeply impressed with such awful, celestial displays of God's omnipotence'. After a summary of Rapin's rules in his Discourse on Pastorals, Virgil, modern French and Italian writers, Pope, Gay and Philips are all measured against them. Pope is 'too polished and refined', Gay 'too slovenly and clownish'.[2] The translator obviously aims somewhere between these extremes:

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1. Daphnis (London, 1768), p. XLVII - XLVIII.
2. Ibid, p.XXVII.

> Mr. Gessner appears to have brought pastoral poetry to a greater degree of perfection than any of his predecessors or contemporaries .... he has in some sort imitated the style and manner of Sir Philip Sidney. But though the Arcadia is luxuriantly adorned with all the graces and ornaments of poetry, yet the too polished characters, and the too often incongruous business of the drama, renders it liable to some of the critical objections already mentioned in this prefatory essay. Mr. Gessner seems studiously to have avoided these improprieties[1].

There follows a long explanation of 'the Moral Instruction which it so judiciously conveys to the reader'[2]. The translator is equally confident about 'the style of Mr. Gessner, though there are not any certain measures used,it may be called poetry rather than prose.'[3] To support this she mentions that 'Longinus calls Herodotus mere Homeric; and Thucydides, as some of the learned affirm, formed his style from Pindar', also 'fragments of Petronius Arbiter are a kind of poetry in prose'[4]. She brings the sequence of proof up to date with Fénélon and Hervey, thereby following Mrs Collyer in her preface to the Death of Abel.

The Prefatory Discourse is half as long as the actual novel and it is an unreal experience to plunge from 'truth of character and purity of thought', 'strict regard paid to decorum' and 'the beauty of a chaste, yet elevated imagination'[5] to the lilting poetry, frank paganism and barely contained sexuality of the shepherds' lives. It is as if the writer of the preface had not read the book.

In a work which is claimed to be inspiringly moral there is no pretence of Christianity. The shepherd men and maidens come together on an island in the river Naethus for a spring festival of love to worship the statues of the nymphs. The God Cupid appears to Daphnis in person; 'lovely as a rosebud; his white round arms, his shining tender body were naked, his

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1. Daphnis (London, 1768), p.XXXVII .
2. Ibid, p.XXXIX.
3. Ibid, p.XLIII.
4. Ibid, p.XLIV.
5. Ibid, p.XLIX.

little face was beautiful as one of the graces, and roses, braided with his golden locks, entwined his head'[1], and Daphnis ferries him across a river. The hymns are a world apart from Addison's Christian psalms:

> O Cupid, thou sweet god of love! how transporting is the joy to love and be beloved! The gods of groves and of the river own thy power; the nightingale sings of thee through the silent night; everything feels thy influence, O Cupid! sweet god of love!
>
> Shoots not love already in the little lisping child that smiling plays with flowers? Yes; it shoots like the first young flower that buds in early Spring. O Cupid sweet god of love.[2]

The predictable epithets of the previous fifty years of pastoral have been refined away. What remains is neither Swiss nor English but a verbal equivalent of the marriage feasts of Gessner's hero, Poussin:

> Their heads were crowned with garlands of white and red roses, and a wreath of various flowers hung down their shoulders, and turned round their waists. Daphnis held a he-dove in his hand, and Phillis a she-dove; which now they killed, whilst their gentle wings beat the hands of their murderers. Phillis, moved with pity, trembled at the deed. They then laid them dead on the altar, and poured honey and oil upon them, and covered them with sweet smelling shrubs.'[3]

This description is of a classicism purged of orgiastic mysteries and priapism. Nothing could be more 18th century and less authentically Greek than Phillis's delicate sensibility, which shudders at wringing a pigeon's neck. In a few decades that same sensibility will award a most immoderate punishment to a Mariner for his slaughter of an albatross.

This Greece toward which the 18th century neo-classicists turn is an Arcadia of simplicity, tenderness and social justice. The drive is partly visual and partly political. Mild as are its manners, this society of Daphnis has strong social implications. The shepherds behave towards

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1. Daphnis (London, 1768), p.18.
2. Ibid, p.115 -116.
3. Ibid, p.114-115.

each other with Reason as well as Sentiment. When Daphnis meets a man who has lost everything in a water-spout his reaction is positively moral:

> 'But,ye gods! why am I poor? I saw his distress with the greatest pity and compassion, and I was much grieved that I could not afford him any relief. Oh! I feel, I feel how happy I should be, if I could but assist him. Ye gods! why am I poor?'[1]

Immediately after this outcry follows a demonstration of the correct attitude to property. Aristus, the wealthy old man rejected by a distant and corrupt society, buys a beautiful cottage and an estate to give it to Daphnis's father so that the two old men can live out an affectionate old age with Daphnis and his young bride. But Daphnis's father already has a cottage and land. These he promptly gives to the man who has lost all in the waterspout. The implications are socially insidious in a Europe of inheriting aristocracies: to each according to his needs.

'Aristus saw the joy of the father and the son, and felt that divine sensation which only God and the benevolent feel! What unspeakable pleasure it is to see the grateful rapture of a heart we have made happy.'[2]

From the example of this essentially Utopian world it is possible to see the first stages of the French Revolution as a neo-Classical event, and to see why Wordsworth turned in 1797 to some land half way between Arcady and Somerset to express his feelings about social justice and human suffering.

Behind its surface chastity and sexual propriety Daphnis is often provocatively sensual. Very shortly after the land distribution Daphnis goes to sleep 'under the shady cover of a willow'. 'An handful of flowers, thrown in his face, suddenly awaked him' and he sees Phillis stand before

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1. Daphnis, p.88,
2. Ibid, p.92.

him, but when he attempts to run into her arms he finds that she has bound him hand and foot in his sleep:

'Thou sportive maid, said Daphnis laughing, stay till I have loosed myself, only stay till then, and I will take my revenge. And then he writhed and twisted himself about as much as he could.'[1]

He threatens, if he is unbound, to kiss her until her whole face glows like a rose, so Phillis makes him promise to abstain from kisses for an hour after he has been released. His revenge then is to keep exactly to the terms of his promise, and there are no kisses until she becomes sensuously impatient. 'Then she began to toy with him, and looked at him with such a languishing smile that Daphnis laught, and pressed her to his breast, and had his revenge in numberless kisses.'[2]

The whole book moves at this level of feeling, and of abstinence only from the final sexual act. In plot it is one long epithalamium in an ideal society, and the Pantisocratic vision was essentially the same one of neo-Classical reason, optimism, married love and Arcadian impracticality. When the shepherds Palaemon and Timaetas accidentally find a treasure as they are digging a vineyard, they decide to bury it again because they are so happy with labour, relished food, wine, water and 'a grateful wife'. 'I want not thy treasure, said Palaemon, keep it all to thyself. Poverty, it is poverty shall still have my praises'.[3]

The language in which the golden world is conveyed has none of the turgidity of Mrs. Collyer's 'poetic prose'. It is not 'natural', but it is elegant, and the artifice hardly appears on its careful surface.

> Daphnis and Phillis then assembled them all again in the arbour of juniper shrubs. The melon in its green net garnished round with bunches of grapes, smiled temptingly on the table; red-cheeked apples

1. Daphnis, p.97.
2. Ibid, p.98.
3. Ibid, p.83.

> and pears, the pomegranate with a green crown and cracked shell, the sweet fig,and every sort of fruit which mild autumn produced, either in smooth or well-closed husks···lay there in long rows, heaped in dishes intermixed with flowers and sweet smelling herbs; whilst flagons stood high above them, full of wine and must.....[1]

This is not Wordsworth's 'language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society' .. 'adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure'[2] but it has escaped from mannerisms and it is carrying the subject matter of the Classical ideal world without the absurd, if endearing, phraseology of the Augustans.

H.C. Hatfield in his book Winckelmann and his German critics[3], allows that Gessner tried to publish Winckelmann and helped him financially. He even admits that Winckelmann praised the Idyllen highly in a letter to Gessner of 17 January 1761. But then he himself dismisses Gessner's work as Rococo, 'there is no grandeur in Gessner's virtuous shepherds and shepherdesses, and much sentimentality.'[4]

Hatfield may, rather improbably, be correct if he is speaking only of Gessner's original German text, but in their English versions Daphnis has a consistent hard elegance and Hooper's New Idyls has several passages of undoubted grandeur where the pagan world lives again with an authentic frisson of the numinous.

The New Idyls is a closecopy of a special version which Gessner had brought out through his own publishing firm. It has an opulent neo Classical appearance, decorated with Gessner's own 'historical plates and vignets'. It was published by S. Hooper. W. Hooper, the translator, had been working from the German for several years before he brought out the New Idyls. In the late 1760s he had translated the Letters, 1768-70, and the Elements

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1. Daphnis, p.125.
2. From the 'Advertisement' to Lyrical Ballads (Bristol, 1798)
3. Henry C. Hatfield, Winckelmann and his German Critics 1755-1781 (New York, 1943).
4. Ibid, p.136.

of Universal Erudition, 1770, of Freiherr von Bielfeld. The New Idyls is dated 1776, but at least three reviews of it: in the Critical Review, the Town and Country Magazine and the Universal Magazine,[1] had appeared as early as the October of 1775, and it must in fact have been published in that year.

There are twenty one Idyls in the book, several of them revised versions of Idyls which had appeared in Rural Poems 1762. The Wooden Leg is called a 'Helvetic Tale' and is contemporary. After this is printed A letter to M. Fuslin on Landscape painting, by Gessner, and The Two Friends of Bourbon, a Moral Tale by M. Diderot. All these pieces were retained in the 1798 Idyls or Pastoral Poems.

The first of the Idyls to be reprinted from this collection was Amnyntas, in the Universal Magazine, a clear indication that the most convincingly antique of Gessner's writings was the most admired. It is a significant document of the neo-Classical and a long quotation will be useful to set against Hatfield's assessment of Gessner:

> 'Lycas and I came from Miletum bearing our offerings to Apollo. We already perceived at a distance the hill on which the temple, adorned with columns of resplendent white, rose, from the bosom of a laurel grove, toward the azure vault of Heaven; beyond the grove our view was lost in the sea's unbounded surface. It was mid-day. The sand burn'd the soles of our feet, and the sun darted its rays so directly on our heads, that the shadows of the locks of hair which covered our foreheads, extended over the whole face. The panting lizard dragged herself with pain through the fern that bordered the path. No sound was heard, save that of the grasshopper chirping amidst the meadow's scorched grass. At each step there rose a cloud of fiery dust that burn'd our eyes, and stuck upon our parched lips. Thus we labour'd on, oppress'd by languor; but soon increas'd our pace, when we saw before us, even on the border of our path, some high and spreading trees. There shade was dark as night. Seized with religious awe we entered the grove, and there inhaled a most refreshing breeze. This delicious place at once afforded all that could regale each sense. The tufted trees inclosed a verdant spot, watered by a pure and most refreshing stream. The branches of the trees, bending with

1. Information from Morgan and Hohlfeld, German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860 (Madison, 1949), p.139.

> golden fruit, hung o'er the bason, and the wild rose, jessamine, and mulberry twined in rich clusters round their trunks. A bubbling spring rose from the foot of a monument, surrounded by honey suckles, the sickly willow, and the creeping ivy - O gods! I cried, how inchanting is this place!'[1]

When the description pauses for intervals of gratuitous reflection there are weaknesses in the language - 'inhaled a most refreshing breeze', 'delicious place', 'regale each sense', verdant spot' and 'oppressed by languor' - but the remainder is a new masculine voice in English descriptive writing. Through Hooper, Gessner is giving English writers what Winckelmann never gave: the temples of pagan gods in Mediterranean sun, the scenario for so much of Byron, Shelley, Keats and Tennyson. In his second version of the Idyl of the unwanted treasure, found by two shepherds, Gessner significantly alters the ending and puts the treasure to symbolic use:

> They at last employed it in building a temple near the grave of the young man. Six columns of white marble, encircled by the ivy, adorned its front, and within was placed the statue of the god Pan. Sweet Moderation! to thee, and to the god Pan was this Temple consecrated.[2]

In this collection the theme of criticism of the accepted forms of society, always implicit in ideal simplicity, is maintained. Milon and Dametus in the Fifteenth Idyl come across the broken scraps of a monument to a Conqueror. Milon remarks that 'Posterity pays to his memory but small regard, and but few flowers are strew'd around his tomb'. 'His Tomb', cries Dametus angrily;

> He was a monster. He laid waste these fertile plains, and of free born men made slaves. The horses of his warriors trampled under foot the husbandman's fair hopes; and with the dead bodies of our ancestors he strew'd the desolated fields...Founding his grandeur on the enormity of his crimes, he displayed his pride in marble palaces, and gorged the blood of the provinces his barbarity had ravag'd. T'was himself that rais'd this pompous monument to his brutal fury.[3]

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1. Solomon (sic) Gessner, New Idyls, translated by W. Hooper M.D. (London, 1776), p.18.
2. Ibid, p.61.
3. Ibid, p.41.

To see a true monument Milon is shown the farm of Dametus's father in 'the peaceful shade of the most beautiful fruit trees which surrounded a spacious and pleasant cottage'. Dametus concludes: 'This country was a waste: it was his labour that fertilised these fields; his hands planted these fruitful trees. We, his children, and our latest posterity, shall bless his ashes, and they who partake with us the fruits of his labours, will with us bless his memory. The prosperity of the upright man remains upon our fields, our tranquil roofs, and us'.

It is possible that Gessner's writings in English would have received more critical attention in the present century if he had been less constructive and wholesome in his sentiments. Certainly he was well served by his last major translator in the eighteenth century, and W. Hooper M.D. stands alongside those other travelled Doctors of Medicine: Paul Henry Maty, Edwin Ash and Thomas Beddoes, who did much to introduce German literature to this country. It is only speculation, but it seems probable that German eminence in medical studies in the latter half of the century was responsible for their fluency in the language,as they may have lived for some years in Germany in the course of their post graduate studies. The weightier side of translations from the German at this period should not be forgotten in the inevitable concentration on poems, plays and novels. Albrecht von Haller's 'Eastern Narrative' Usong[1] was published in 1772, but only in the reflection of his encyclopaedic fame from:

Pathological observations, chiefly from the dissections of morbid bodies (London, 1755).

Medical, chirugical and anatomical cases and experiments (London, 1758)

Bibliotheca Botanica, 2 vols. (London, 1771)

Bibliotheca Chirurgica, 2 vols. (London, 1774-5)

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1. Baron Haller, Usong, an Eastern Narrative, 2 vols. (London, 1772).

Bibliotheca Anatomica, 2 vols. (London, 1774-7).

It was on the weighty wings of these and of Zinzendorf's devotional works that the lighter German fictions crossed the North Sea.

After the silence which met Daphnis in the magazines the response to Hooper's version of the Idyls was deafening.

In 1776 alone eighteen of Hooper's translations were reprinted in the major magazines in addition to the reviews, which were often long and usually generous. Gessner Idyls were by no means novelties to the periodicals,[1] but there had been nothing previously to come near to this wave of popularity. It seems likely that the illogical tendency of periodicals in the 1780s, like the Edinburgh Magazine and the Lady's Magazine, to label many of their short stories as 'A German Tale' rose from this association of brief sentimental episodes with Gessner's name in the mind of the public. This in its turn may have had something to do with the public taste in the 1790s for 'German Gothic' novels, though the themes and form of the Gothic novels were overwhelmingly French and English in origin and development.

The following is an indication of the coverage given to Hooper-Gessner in this year, 1776:-

Amyntas, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.9.
The Wooden Leg, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.11.
Menalcus and Alexis, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.65.
Daphne, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.72.
Daphnis, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.126.
Thyrsis, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.339.
Myrtilus and Chloe, The Edinburgh Magazine, V, p.339.
Menalcus and Alexis, The Gentleman's Magazine, XLVI, p.80.
Myrtilus and Chloe, The Gentleman's Magazine, XLVII, p.297.
The Wooden Leg, The Hibernian Magazine, VI, p.104.
Daphnis, Universal Magazine, LVIII, p.121.
Thyrsis, Universal Magazine, LIX, p.12.
Conjugal Happiness, Universal Magazine, LIX, p.173.
Lycidas and Damon, Universal Magazine, LIX, p.228.
Daphne and Micon, Universal Magazine, LIX, p.298.
Prayer to the Marine Gods and Carnation, Universal Magazine, LIX, p.347.
The Wooden Leg, Westminster Magazine, IV, p.371.[2]

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1. For instance The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement featured Gellert and Gessner's Inkle and Yarico in two parts in 1771, p.164 and 197.
2. Information from Morgan and Hohlfeld, German Literature in British Magazines (Madison, 1949).

Scotland's favour is marked in this list.

With this triumph of a particular version of Greece in a mythical golden age it is worth returning to Hatfield's belief that the relation between Gessner and Winckelmann was 'at most one of affinity, the first edition of the Idyllen could hardly have been influenced by the Hellenist, nor do those idylls published later (1762 and 1772) show any traces of his beliefs'.

The date of the first Idyllen, 1756, just one year after the Gedanken, seems highly suggestive of close contact. Gessner was a partner in the printing firm 'Gessner Orell und Fuessli' and so would have had no trouble in hurrying his very brief pieces through the presses. Winckelmann seems to have revelled in the kind of epicene sentimentality which Mengs caught so exactly in the fake fresco of Zeus kissing Ganymede, and in their English form Gessner's early Idyls certainly have an element of the epicene in them, as have his off-cuts to Hooper's New Idyls. So it seems very likely that Gessner caught in his prose poems something very close to the ideal and unreal Greece of Winckelmann's wish dreams; but by 1772 either these images were maturing, losing the Rococo element, or these later translations were using a more austere language and approaching the neo-Classical. Certainly the British approved them.

The Letter from M. Gessner to M. Fuslin,[1] author of the History of the Swiss Painters which follows the Idyls is a careful application of Winckelmann's advice to painters and sculptors of the human form to landscape painters. The advice is simple: do not paint from nature, first fill your mind with the examples and methods of the ideal landscape painter. This perfect master is Poussin. Poussin to Gessner is what Praxiteles was to Winckelmann, and Claude Lorraine stands very close to Poussin in excellence. Gessner's appreciation of these illustrates the whole alien

1. Henry Fuseli's father, Johann Caspar Fuessli. Gessner was godfather of Henry's brother Heinrich.

aesthetic of the neo classical:

> The two Poussins, and Claud Lorrain at last possess'd me entirely. It was in their works that I found dignity and truth united. Not a simple and servile imitation of nature, but a choice of the most sublime and interesting beauty....they transport us....into countries where nature is not savage, but surprising in her variety; where, under the most happy sky, every plant acquires its utmost perfection..... It is thus the Greeks and Romans appear to us, when our imagination, render'd enthusiastic by their great actions, transports itself to the ages of their prosperity and glory. Repose and amenity reign throughout all the countries the pencil of Lorrain has created. The mere view of his pictures excites that sweet emotion, those delicious sensations that a well chosen prospect has the power to produce in the mind.[1]

The idea that man improves Nature has a superb and optimistic arrogance, and the theory is not limited to painting. As Gessner urged: 'The poet and the painter, friends and rivals, draw from the same source; they both borrow from nature, and communicate their riches by rules that are analagous. Variety without confusion. That is the grand principle of all their compositions.'[2] This was to be Keats's path, via Lemprière and Leigh Hunt, to his ideal, rather than real, beauties. Both Endymion and Hyperion are set in ideal landscapes: ClaudeLorraine's 'countries where nature is not savage'.

The third section of the New Idyls, The story of the two friends of Bourbon, is not by Gessner but by his friend through exchange of letters Diderot, the French Encyclopaedist. This introduces a curious slant to the history of Gessner's influence in this country and, since the Diderot connection reappears even less predictably in 1792, The two friends of Bourbon will more appropriately be considered later.

Before following the link between Gessner and Diderot, Wieland's contribution to the Greek 'air' of the 1770s should be noticed because

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1. New Idyls. p.96-97.
2. Ibid, p.101.

these imaginary dialogues between notables of the Greek world developed in the 1790s, in Wieland's periodical the Teutsche Merkur, into a far more Radical commentary on current events than anything associated with Gessner. These later Dialogues of the Gods[1] predictably tempted parlour rebels like Thomas Holcroft and William Taylor to translate them, either as books or for periodicals.[2]

But the Wieland Dialogues translated in the 1770s were milder affairs that could perhaps be described as polite smoking room literature, with that faint hint of the improper which clings to most English versions of Wieland. Socrates out of his senses[3] was published in 1771 and Dialogues[4] from the German: Araspes and Panthea, and Socrates and Timoclea, in 1775. Wieland's writing inspired eminently urbane translations, which accounts for the frequent and favourable reviews which these two books received, but they savour far more of the after dinner talk of German intellectuals than of Greece. In Araspes and Panthea for instance Cyrus warns Araspes that his platonic love for the captive princess Panthea will soon turn fleshly unless he avoids her person. Araspes denies the possibility and is given charge of Panthea. He attempts to surprise her honour and is repulsed. Crestfallen at his lapse he apologises to Cyrus, who says that in the same position he too would have fallen. Araspes, forgiven, is sent off on a military expedition.

This is not revolutionary literature, but the 'Essay on Sentiment' included with the Dialogues makes an approving, and therefore gently radical, response to Belcour's speech in the West Indian: 'I am the offspring of Distress, and every child of sorrow is my brother; whilst I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open to mankind.'[5]

1. C.M. Wieland, Dialogues of the Gods (London, 1795), published by J.Johnson.
2. There is a lengthy extract in the Critical Review, XVII (1796). p.172-77.
3. C.M.Wieland, Socrates out of his senses, 2 vols. (London, 1771), translated by Wintersted.
4. C.M.Wieland, Dialogues, (London, 1775), translated anonymously.
5. Ibid, 'Essay on Sentiment', p.X.

Twenty one years later in Taylor's translation of Dialogues of the Gods Wieland has his Jupiter and Juno discussing the inevitability not only of the dissolution of the institution of monarchy and aristocracy but the fact that the gods themselves are tottering to a fall. In the last dialogue The Federation, Jupiter presides approvingly over the Champ de Mars in Paris on the day of the Grand Federation and prevents his alter ego, Jupiter Pluvius, from spoiling the occasion with a rain storm.

Wieland's History of Agathon[1], translated into English in 1773 is a substantial novel set in Ancient Greece but it is difficult to take it seriously as a piece of neo-Classicism. It has no single convincing description of a Greek temple or palace, only Wieland's usual vague richness of marble, silk and ornament. The hero travels from sexual dalliance to sexual dalliance in the courts of the Tyrants of Sicily and the cities of old Greece, but even the authenticity of Lord Lytton or Mary Renault is quite beyond Wieland. Everything is bland and over every incident a shower of trivial analysis falls.

The Monthly Review found it satisfactory enough, it is interesting that Wieland rarely received a harsh review in his long period of translation into English, he 'spirits his readers back into the remote ages of Ancient Greece....when Plato, Socrates, Xenophon and other venerable sages flourished.'[2] The idea behind Agathon was, of course, an admirable one in a time when most of Western Europe was educated in the Classics. The remarkable thing was that no one had thought of such a novel before. The Monthly Review was near the mark when it wrote,'We observed that we thought he kept the manner of Sterne, the English Rabelais, in view, and we still consider him as in some measure a disciple of that eminent master.'[3] The introduction

1. C.M. Wieland, The History of Agathon, 2 vols. (London, 1773). Translated anonymously.
2. Monthly Review, L (1774), p.177.
3. Ibid, p.177.

to yet another complex flirtation with a courtesan at the start of the second volume of Agathon is virtually a pastiche of Sterne's arch philosophising:

> The state of a poet's fancy, the fidelity of a mistress, and the friendship of a Hippias are, perhaps, three of the most uncertain things in nature. The favour of the great may, perhaps, be considered as the fourth: it is generally lost as easily as acquired; and has also this resemblance to the favours of certain nymphs, that whoever has been so imprudent as to partake of either, must usually purchase his fleeting dream of pleasure with lasting pain.[1]

Even the Translator in his Preface complains of the number of solecisms and 'an indelicacy in some of his allusions which we should not have expected in so elegant a writer. The affectation of low humour is too prevalent, and the various apostrophes of Sir, Sirs, My charming Ladies & etc, though agreeable in so desultory and miscellaneous a writer, as the author of Tristram Shandy, seem little suited to the importance of this work.'[2] Then follows some typical hypocrisy of the period: a wish that Wieland 'had in some places checked the sallies of his imagination; which hath led him to give too alluring a picture of the most seducing, though indeed the most excusable of all human foibles.'[3]

The brief history of German literature which opens this Preface is remarkable for its lack of information. Only Gellert and Rabener are mentioned of living writers, apart from Wieland himself.

It is difficult to be precise about the essential tedium which hangs about the translations of Wieland. Until his Oberon, when he gave back to the English the Spenserian method which they could have revived for themselves from the native original, his translations have a stale, derivative feeling. They seem to have attracted translators determined to present him in conformist prose. They are sophisticated, but in just that self conscious, polished

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1. Wieland, Agathon (1773), ii, 2.
2. Ibid, i, XIV.
3. Ibid, i, X V.

manner which was the essential bane of English writing until the Romantics disturbed it. The very familiarity of this manner probably gave him an easy popularity in this country and made his contribution to the stream of our writing a trivial one, always excepting the astonishing 'Christabel'.

Diderot's link with Gessner's writings in this country remains to be considered.

The Advertisement at the beginning of New Idyls states, 'The story of the Two Friends of Bourbon was communicated by Mr. Diderot to our author, who thought proper to publish it with these Idyl s,as a monument of friendship that the cultivation of letters alone has produced between two men, whom distant countries have ever held separate'.[1] So this French short story was not included by a whim of W. Hooper but as part of Gessner's scheme. It came to the attention of British readers simply because they were interested in German literature.

As a choice of narrative to accompany the perfect world of the Idyls it is in such sharp contrast that Gessner must have included it to make the kind of second-hand Radical point which his own mild nature hesitated to make directly. In the ideal world of feeling and reason which Gessner describes human life is lived in unambitious perfection. In the real world of contemporary France where Diderot's story is set, two loving cousins with most of their friends and relatives are destroyed by a brutal legal system propping up a foolish excise system.

In style the narrative is fast moving and harshly restrained: a credit to Diderot, Gessner and W. Hooper. After Felix, the survivor of the two friends, has been involved in another clash with the excise men,

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1. New Idyls, Advertisement.

> He took the body of the collier on his shoulders and went back to the cottage, where the woman and her children were still asleep. He stopped at the door, sat himself down with his back against a tree, his face turn'd toward the entrance of the hut, and the dead body at his feet.
>
> The wife awoke, and found that her husband was gone from her side. She looked round for Felix, he too was gone. She arose, she went forth, she saw, she cry'd out, she fell on the earth.[1]

which is almost biblical in its grim rhythm. In the end, when almost everyone is dead, except Felix in Prussian exile, the good priest regrets none of the deaths; his ethic cannot include the workings of absolute love. The story's strange bare conclusion is:

'that there can scarce be any unconfined and solid friendship but between those that have nothing. A man is then all the fortune of his friend, and his friend all his.'[2]

The theme: that Society as it is shaped at present must essentially destroy the passions of the poor, is the same one that works through the most disturbing poems of Wordsworth's canon, written between his return from the Annette Vallon episode and his side movement to the inspiring influence of Nature in 'Tintern Abbey.'

It was ingenious, if devious, of Gessner to slip this thought provoking tract into the mind of an unwary reader who was expecting only pastoral eclogues with prim neo-Classical vignets. But he was aiming at just the two effects which are successfully compressed together in the Lyrical Ballads: the pastoral and the socially disturbing. Wordsworth may not have been directly influenced by Gessner's example but he wrote in the same tradition of the ideal and the revolutionary.

Such neo-Classical writing as Gessner's was essentially revolutionary in the context of the 1770s, because it praised a seductively familiar classicial simplicity, not Rousseau's remote Huron and Irroquois, but Arcadian shepherds first encountered in school-room translation work. The purity

1. New Idyls, p.117.
2. Ibid, p.129.

of these Idyls was likely to throw into contrast the corruption and over-sophistication of an aristocracy, like Marie Antoinette's circle, which patronised Arcadian fashions and played at butter-making in the neo-Classical dairy at Rambouillet. So ec logues popular in France as in England, Turgot, it should be remembered, began the translation of them into French, suggested to restless minded readers an appealing alternative society shaped by reason, and based upon a Classical Ideal.

The next Gessner move,in Scotland,was the least predictable of all. Gessner ended his life, probably by a stroke, in 1788, while holding the appropriately sylvan post of Warden of the Sihlwald, that forest which lies across the road from Zurich to Zug. Then in 1792 in Edinburgh was published the first collection of German plays translated into English. It was a time when curiosity had been growing in Britain about dramatists such as Lessing, Schiller and Goethe. Mackenzie's 1788 lecture had been published in 1790 and so had The Speculator. All the intoxicating riches of the Sturm und Drang were waiting, yet one of the three playwrights to feature in Dramatic Pieces from the German was Gessner, the mild and acceptable pastoral poet.

The facts were not as they appeared. If a wary publisher in Edinburgh was to launch a first collection it would be good sense to include a popular and established German author whose name would balance out Goethe's unsavoury association with suicide and The Sorrows of Werter[1]. Goethe's play in the collection was The Sister, a mildly sensational work in which Goethe himself had once played and whose Marianne is supposed to hint at his relationship with Charlotte von Stein. Ayrenhoff's The Set of Horses completed a safe publisher's package with a comedy of aristocratic manners.

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1. Translated into English in 1779 and immediately notorious.

The play The Conversation of a father with his children, attributed to Gessner on the title page, was not by Gessner but by Diderot. The father and son in the play are both actually called Diderot but the Gessner attribution was never corrected. Henry Mackenzie, who probably translated all three plays, was in almost the habit of incorrect attributions, The Set of Horses was supposed to be written not by Ayrenhoff but by a mythical 'Emdorff'.

The false Gessner play can only be described as one of subdued brilliance. It recalls nothing so much as an experimental play put on in the 1940s by the BBC on their Third Programme. It is civilised but humanly authentic, and in its single act, while never moving from one drawing room of a bourgeois home at bed time, it is unfailingly surprising in the turns and twists of the discussion.

Though the Diderot son of this conversation play is a radical the last word goes to the wise conservatism of the father. The play's problem: the clash between the law and humanity is essentially the same as that of The two friends of Bourbon but the conclusion is the opposite.

Diderot père went once to act as executor to an old clergyman's estate. There was no will but there were many impoverished relatives among whom the fortune was to be shared. As he was proceeding about this humanly satisfying task he discovered a will which left everything to a rich, personally detestable bookseller. He was faced with the decision: should he secretly destroy the will or act as a true executor and pass all the money to an unpleasant person who had no need of it?

Everyone in the company said what they would have done, the young Radical Diderot demanding 'Is not the sense of the whole human race more sacred than that of the legislative?' But in the end, and very persuasively, the elder Diderot explains why, on the advice of a clergyman, he followed the correct legal course. The description of the terrifying outcry of

the poor relatives, who have to be restrained from battering their babies' brains out, only persuades the reader (for the play was never acted) that the forces of emotional chaos have been rightly resisted. It is the voice of the old Catholic Europe of established order and, in the struggle between Reason and a traditional society, Britain followed old Diderot's course of the supposed Gessner play. The episode does not make sense, but it happened and has to be recorded.

There was nothing unusual about the republication in Edinburgh, in 1798, the year of the Lyrical Ballads, of the New Idyls as Idyls or Pastoral Poems. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric[1], 1783 had established Gessner as a classic.

> He presents pastoral life to us with all the embelishments of which it is susceptible; but without any excess of refinement ... he writes to the heart; and he has enriched the subjects of his Idylls with incidents which give rise to much tender sentiment. Scenes of domestic felicity are beautifully painted ... he appears to me to have outdone all the moderns.[2]

Gessner's death in 1788 revived rather than lowered his reputation. Long reviews appeared in periodicals in 1789[3] of the Abbé Bertola's work on Gessner[4], and Hottinger's Salomon Gessner, 1796[5] produced identical reviews in the Critical Review, XIX (1796), p.502, the Annual Register XXXVIII (1796), p.338 and The European Magazine, XXXI (1797), p.384; so the interest of the public was still alive. The essay on Landscape Painting had been separately printed in 1796.[6]

Idyls or Pastoral Poems had a Preface in ornate style by its new Editor which compared the refreshment to be gained by studying Voltaire Klopstock or Camoens to 'the erect expansion of the parts of a sunflower'.[7]

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1. Hugh Blair D.D., Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters, 2 vols. (London, 1783).
2. Ibid, ii, 348.
3. Literary Magazine and British Review, II (1789), p.241.
4. Giorgi d'Bertola, Lobrede auf Gessner (Zurich, 1789).
5. Johann Hottinger, Salomon Gessner (Zurich, 1796).
6. Gessner on Landscape Painting (London, 1796).
7. Solomon Gessner, Idyls or Pastoral Poems (Edinburgh, 1798), p.VI.

sic

He went on to irrelevant and oddly phrased praise of Goethe, apparently a very late defence of Werter:

> 'thou alone hast known to exhibit genius, in combination with a morbid irritability of feeling, inflamed with genuine love, overwhelmed in real despair, endowed with an energy of imagination which becomes mischievous, by filling all surrounding nature with visions of misery and horror, and with a strength of reason which serves only to betray by lending its aid to fatal error.[1]

What is most remarkable about the Preface is a comment on versions of the Pastoral which reads very like a criticism of the style and subject matter of the Lyrical Ballads:

> Many of the moderns have entertained too narrow notions of the nature of Pastoral Poetry ... rural innocence and felicity of the fancied Age of Gold. Others have conceived that the ignorance, the prejudices, the mean and rude dialect of the lowest rustics ought ever to be faithfully copied by the pastoral poet.[2]

the writer was against 'the display of those deep workings of passion which abstract the mind, before which they are displayed, from attending to the images of rural scenery', but thought that, 'in the tender, what Gessner has here displayed is scarcely excelled even by a Sterne or a Mackenzie!'[3]

This republishing roused the periodicals to a number of reprints of separate Idyls; the Monthly Mirror, always interested in German writers, printed more than any other. Coleridge was grumbling about Gessner's 'coy and distant dallying with the appetites' in a letter to Sotheby, 19 July 1802, and translating him 'to force myself out of the metaphysical trains of thought which when I wished to write a poem, beat up game of far other kind'[4], but, though Gessner's popularity and influence are clearly far

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1. Idyls or Pastoral Poems (1798), p. VII.
2. Ibid, p.IX.
3. Ibid, p.XIII.
4. From the same letter.

from exhausted, with the end of the century the limit of this study has been reached.

CHAPTER FOUR

Baron Riesbeck and Henry Mackenzie - the circumstances behind the Address to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 21 April 1788

It must be apparent, from the preceding chapters,that 1788 was only a magical starting point for German influence on British literature if the previous twenty-eight years of German influence are completely ignored. At least two earlier books have trapped themselves in this disadvantage by the sheer bias of their titles: F.W. Stokoe's 'German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788-1818, and Frederic Ewen's The Prestige of Schiller in England 1788-1859. But even if the false view that German influence was essentially Gothic, violent, gloomy and free is accepted, 1788 is an artifical and unsatisfactory date. Literary lightning flashes of original perception are always suspect. Most events are cumulative. Mackenzie's Address was the direct result of two previous years of journalistic activity.

Frederic Ewen, in his book on Schiller, was at least conscious of an improbability:

> 'In his 'Account of the German Theatre' occurs the first traceable mention of Schiller in England. What it was that turned Henry Mackenzie's gaze in the direction of Germany is something of a puzzle. He knew no German; his acquaintance with the German drama was derived from French versions.[1]

and F.W. Stokoe is hesitant: 'It was probably on this occasion that Schiller's name was first publicly mentioned in the British Isles'[2]. Both Stokoe and V. Stockley were at least aware of Hans Schwartz's inaugural lecture

1. Frederic Ewen, The Prestige of Schiller in England 1788-1859 (New York, 1932), p.10.
2. F.W. Stokoe, German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788-1818 (Cambridge, 1926), p.19.

on Mackenzie at Winterthur (1911) which had suggested that an article entitled: 'Sketch of the origin and progress of Dramatic Poetry in Germany', in the Edinburgh Magazine, August 1786,[1] might have influenced MacKenzie. Rather more culpably, H.W. Thompson, whose book A Scottish Man of Feeling is wholly concerned with Mackenzie's contemporary Edinburgh, picks up the point only to reject it: 'it is doubtful whether the article can have had any influence except possibly to call Mackenzie's attention to the subject.'[2]

These authors have not only ignored contemporary periodicals and publications, they have ignored clear pointers within Mackenzie's Address which suggest why he was giving it.

Mackenzie's Address was not really an 'account' of the German Theatre as its title claimed, it was a 'defence' of it. Far from being the occasion when Schiller's name was 'first publicly mentioned in the British Isles' the Address was delivered seven months after a wilfully sensational article on Schiller in the Edinburgh Magazine[3], at that time the Scottish capital's leading literary periodical. But Mackenzie was not only trying to put a German dramatist's mild notoriety into perspective, he was replying to a particular book, Baron Riesbeck's Travels through Germany[4] which had come out in translation twelve months before, in March 1787, and which contained a long, malicious and particularly effective attack on the new wave of the German theatre.

This book by Riesbeck has received virtually no critical attention in the present century, though it contains the only detailed account of

1. Edinburgh Magazine, IV (1786), p.92.
2. H.W. Thompson, A Scottish Man of Feeling (Oxford, 1931), p.285.
3. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.225, the article was in the October issue.
4. Baron Riesbeck, Travels through Germany, 3 vols. (London, 1787).

the theatre and theatrical personalities of the German world to appear in English in the whole eighteenth century. In view of the rage for German playwrights in the 1790's this seems an unlikely fact; but it is true. The only account of Weimar and its resident lions, Goethe and Wieland, appeared as early as 1787 and was written by a native German, from Wurtemberg, Baron Riesbeck. No Englishman, not even Matthew Lewis, who visited Weimar in 1792, troubled to update Riesbeck's extremely biased account. But Riesbeck's version of the German theatre was not simply published in March 1787. Two compressed and deliberately distorted versions of it were given much wider publicity than its three expensive volumes could hope for. These were in the Edinburgh Magazine and the European Magazine and London Review, both of them in April 1787.

This puts Mackenzie's Address into a very different perspective. The German enthusiasm is usually described as mounting a rising wave of success from Mackenzie's Address in 1788, on through the 1790's, until it met the withering right-wing onslaught of Canning's satire-play The Rovers in the Anti-Jacobin in 1798. In fact Mackenzie was supporting an already suspect literary cause. The right wing reaction against the radical tenor and flamboyant emotions of German Sturm und Drang drama had begun in this country, instantly and apparently instinctively, before the first play had ever been translated. The conservative literary tradition in this country was stronger and more vigilant than has been supposed.

The evidence within the Address for Mackenzie's beleaguered position is plain. When speaking of The Robbers he said: 'Everybody has heard the anecdote of its effects on the scholars at the school of Fribourg'[1]. He could say this with confidence to an Edinburgh audience because the Edinburgh Magazine had, in the previous October, devoted two pages to a detailed

1. Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, II (Edinburgh, 1790), p.191.

and circumstantial account of the scandalous episode: 'Remarkable effect produced by the Representation of a Tragedy in Germany'[1] Whether this story of the Räuber-style rebellion in the school at Fribourg ever happened or not, it was the kind of story of youthful irresponsibility which the staid and elderly enjoy shaking their heads over; and it remained generally current in literary Britain for the remainder of the century, probably with a destructive effect on Schiller's influence on our theatre.

That Baron Caspar Riesbeck's view of the new drama was very much in the forefront of Mackenzie's thoughts is proven by the fact that he quoted fifteen lines from his book, after respectfully mentioning his name. This reference seems not to have been followed up because Mackenzie ingeniously quoted the only section of the three chapters Riesbeck devotes to contemporary German literature in which the Baron is not aggressively and amusingly attacking the figures and the movement that Mackenzie revered. Mackenzie quoted a harmless piece of amateur sociology about the sharp division of classes in German towns and avoided the preceding paragraph which opens, most unhelpfully for his case, with:

> The next in rank on the German stage after the madmen and murderers, are drunkards, soldiers, and watchmen.[2]

It is interesting that, at the beginning and the end of the 'German Mania' the most telling criticism, Riesbeck's and Canning's was ridicule, not serious moral assault.

While the facts of the writings which led to Mackenzie's Address are plain evidence in books and periodicals, certain claims of personal association which may have influenced him are speculative but still worth examination.

Henry Mackenzie 1745-1831 was, essentially, a man of one novel, and

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.225.
2. Riesbeck, Travels, i, 66.

that novel was the effortlessly casual The Man of Feeling, published anonymously and after much delay in 1771, and a very probable influence on The Sorrows of Werter 1774. The Man of Feeling reveals much of Mackenzie's sensibility and even his moral standards, and will be immediately relevant to consideration of what exactly he was admiring in the German drama.

His first reference to German poetry was in a letter of 10 March 1771 and reveals him for a Goth or at least non-Classical. The letter had been praising a self taught German poetess, a Mrs Durbach, and continued: 'Some of the German productions which have lately been translated into English were highly popular but they had too many prettinesses for me'.[1] This is likely to be a reference to Gessner, three of whose Pastorals, translated by 'Germanicus', had appeared during 1770 in The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement. That Mackenzie's taste was untypical of his time is indicated by the fact that, in 1776, the Edinburgh Magazine and Review featured no less than eight of Gessner's Idyls in translation, a point worth stressing for, while Gessner's record of four books published in England is not impressive, the real medium which was conveying him to British readers throughout the period was the periodical.

Mackenzie wrote a play, The Prince of Tunis, which was performed at the Edinburgh Theatre in 1773 and another, The Shipwreck, performed at Covent Garden in 1783. From January 1779 to May 1780 he edited a magazine The Mirror writing forty two of the hundred and ten papers himself, stealing one story from the French, another from the Italian. In the relatively close circle of Edinburgh literati Mackenzie was an intimate friend of Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University. Stewart entertained Robert Burns at his country place, Mossgiel,[2] and it was through

1. Quoted in H.W. Thompson, A Scottish Man of Feeling, p.282.
2. The dinner at Mossgiel took place 3 October 1786. The Burns review in The Lounger came out in the same month.

Stewart that Mackenzie learnt of Burns, going on to honour himself, more than Burns, with a generous review in his second magazine, The Lounger.

Stewart was an active Freemason and a polite Radical. In 1783 he had visited Paris with Lord Ancrum and it must have been at that time that he became a friend of Nicolas de Bonneville. The evidence for the friendship is a letter from the Radical English playwright and novelist Thomas Holcroft to Stewart. The whole writing career of Holcroft himself was intricately bound up with translations from the German. The letter is completely trivial: an endless gossipy flow of unctious exactitude, irresistibly suggestive of a male version of Emma's Miss Bates:

> .... I am recovered of my fears. I believe, Sir, that you know how deeply I am interested in whatever concerns Monsieur de Bonneville. At present, or rather at the moment he wrote, he was severely afflicted with the toothache; but this, though a terrible evil while it lasts, is not I hope a lasting evil. I shall transcribe your kind expressions concerning him in my next, for which give me leave to thank you: I assure you they gave me pleasure, yes, Sir, great pleasure.[1]

Evidently Dugald Stewart and Holcroft had both written several letters to De Bonneville without receiving a reply. The letter can be dated to 1784 by its mention of the urgency of work on The Noble Peasant, Holcroft's play with music which was put on in 1784. At this time De Bonneville was one of the two authors of the twelve volume Nouveau Théâtre Allemand (Paris, 1782-85), and performing far and away the greater part of the translating work. In 1785 he brought out his last volume containing Les Voleurs by Schiller, the only version of Die Räuber which Mackenzie had been able to read at the time of his Address. In 1786 De Bonneville came over to London and went on up to Scotland hoping to be initiated into a Masonic Lodge. By the secretive nature of Freemasonry it is not known if he was successful, but in 1788 be brought out a book entitled, La Maçonnerie

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1. Memoirs of the late Thomas Holcroft, written by himself and continued from his diary notes and other papers by W. Hazlitt, 3 vols. (London, 1816), iii, 276.

Ecossoise comparée avec les trois professions[1], so he probably was. If the man who translated Die Räuber, with its notes on Schiller, was a friend of Mackenzie's friend and present in Edinburgh as early as 1786, a year after the Voleurs volume, twelve, had been published, it does not seem necessary to search any further for the origin of Mackenzie's interest in German drama in general and Die Räuber in particular.

Details of periodical articles leading to the 1788 Address are complicated by the inveterate cannibalism of journals of the period. Papers and poems often appear in two or three journals, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes after the delay of a month or two. The three periodicals most involved in the journalistic pressures which must have influenced Mackenzie were Paul Henry Maty's New Review, which has been described in an earlier chapter, The European Magazine and London Review, an urbane publication which lived up to its title by a higher than usual incidence of articles on Continental events, and The Edinburgh Magazine.

This last was founded as The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany in 1785 by J. Sibbald, an Edinburgh bookseller. It was a monthly and ran as a successful rival to the much older Scots Magazine until Sibbald's death in 1803. It had a circulation of between six and seven hundred copies. By January 1786 it had already demonstrated some interest in German aesthetics by publishing a letter of M. Fuseli relating his 'Observations upon some Statues and Pictures of Rome.'[2] which he had carried out at the request of Winckelmann. Predictably, from Fuseli's known tastes, these included a rapture over the Hermaphrodite in the Borghese.

In August 1786 the Edinburgh Magazine and the European Magazine both

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1. Information from Philippe Le Harivel, Nicolas de Bonneville Pré Romanti que et Révolutionnaire 1760-1828 (Strasbourg, 1923).
2. Edinburgh Magazine, III (1786), p.43.

brought out an identical abstract of a dissertation prefixed to the Théâtre Allemand. It is important not to confuse the four volume, second edition, of Junker and Liebault's Théâtre Allemand, which came out in 1785 (the first edition of only half the size had come out in 1771) with the much more ambitious, twelve volume Nouveau Théâtre Allemand which Friedel and De Bonneville brought out between 1782 and 1785. Friedel and De Bonneville aroused much wider interest with their volumes because they included many more Sturm und Drang tragedies. Even in their enlarged 2nd edition Junker and Liebault did not place Die Räuber or anything else by Schiller. But Friedel and De Bonneville's introductory 'Histoire abrégée du Théâtre Allemand' was extensively based upon Junker's introductory 'Dissertation surl'origine, les progrès et l'Etate actuel de la poésie théâtrale en Allemagne', so it was not remarkable for the two British periodicals to use the Junker and Liebault introduction for their abstract.

This, under the title Sketch of the Origin and Progress of Dramatic Poetry in Germany, was an uninformative piece of writing. It fails to mention a single play or a solitary playwright of the new German drama by name. About a page and a half of double columns in length, it spends at least two thirds of its words on a history of German drama from the Middle Ages to Gottsched. With that dramatist it comes to mild contemporary life: 'yet there was always a predominant party against him who looked upon the bold and free spirit of the English drama as most suited to the genius of the Germans, and who therefore took Shakespeare rather than Racine for their model'. Explaining that dramatic taste in Germany was fluctuating between 'a mixture of English energy and pathos with French elegance and precision', it continued:

> It is not yet perhaps arrived at a fixed state of confidence; but as imitation is daily giving place to invention and genius in that country, and the German bards are getting out of their leading-strings, we may soon expect to see the national character, and the high

> improvements it has of late years received from the rapid progress of taste and true science, stamped on more original lines on the dramatic productions of the German poets.[1]

This contrives to excite national pride in Shakespeare and yet suggest the stamp of French approval for the new German writing. It cannot be overemphasised how second-hand and French dominated this English contact with Germany is. Britain was imprisoned in insular academic ignorance by the almost total lack of German speakers. British reactions to French culture at this time are ambivalent. France, the most awesome and civilised of European states, was, geographically, the only neighbour, but war after war had filled British critics with an almost Pavlovian reaction of antagonism to French literature. An attempt to introduce the techniques of the Comédie Française had produced an actual riot.[2] Italy and Spain were dormant dramatic volcanoes, so the merest suggestion that an alternative culture was rising beyond the Rhine was stimulating to British expectations, but the more so, paradoxically, if the redoubtable but detested French had been impressed by it first.

But it is probably a mistake to suppose that the English were looking for anything very disturbing in foreign innovation. Culture at this period appears to be very closely related to politics. As well as being insular British literature was absurdly self satisfied. It is very doubtful whether the island was in any way ready for revolution in literature or politics. The century which was just ending had been one, from the British point of view, of outstanding commercial and imperial success. Patriotism was as solid a force as religious cant. It is often stressed that German literature was favoured in the 1790s because France had indulged

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, IV (1786), p.94. European Magazine, X (1786), p.116.
2. In 1752.

in the Terror and yet another war. But long before that war ended, and while German states were still valuable potential allies in new coalitions, German literature became suspect and rejected because it became seen as revolutionary. It was against this deep conservatism that Mackenzie had to speak and the English romantics had to write. The literary ethos of a country which is being visibly misruled is unlikely to have much appeal in a successful state to any except the inevitable discontented minority. Wordsworth's own flirtation with German influence is a paradigm of the process.

The dissertation from Theâtre Allemand was noticed by Maty's New Review[1] in the same year but with markedly less interest. Maty's journal was far more sophisticated and aware of German developments than the other two because Maty himself spoke fluent German. In the same ninth volume it contained a sparklingly fresh translation of the two scenes from Lessing's Emilia Gal otti, so it could afford to cast a cold eye on the Junker collection. Maty's rueful reaction to reader's letters about his Emilia Gal otti translation was most perceptive. He realised what resistance English 'first judges of literary merit' would present to the language of the new German plays:

> there are those amongst my readers, and some of the first judges of literary merit, who do not think so highly of it, as I did and as my correspondent does. Indeed it must be confessed, that the dialogue is a little too elevated, and that every sentence seems intended to have a point. Still however I must think there is great merit.[2]

Unless Maty was being sarcastic, this is an extraordinary comment on English expectations of dramatic language. That he should feel uneasy at having to defend writing where 'every sentence seems intended to

1. New Review, IX (1786), p.172.
2. Ibid, p.172

have a point' proves how healthy an influence Lessings writings could have been on the cliché ridden dialogue of the average English play. Unhappily Lessings language was employed to carry Lessing's melodrama.

> Emilia) Formerly these were fathers, who to save a child drove the shaft in themselves; fathers who made a second present of life, but those were deeds of old time; there are no such fathers now.
>
> Edward) There are, my daughter, there are, (stabs her) Gods, what have I done?
>
> Emilia) Broke off a rose before the storm did blast it.- Let me kiss the fatherly hand.[2]

which the English were not prepared to accept, neither at this time nor when the play was staged expensively at Drury Lane in 1794, running for a mere three nights. Shakespeare had license to leave the stage littered with corpses, but when a foreigner attempted something in the style it was in bad taste.

What is valuable in Maty's New Review is this emphasis upon the linguistic as opposed to the thematic innovation of German plays in translation. At first it seems improbable that works in a foreign language could have a therapeutic effect on English style; but that had been the effect of Gessner's thematically insipid Idyls. Translation is a discipline, and in the mannered world of English mid-century letters it was likely to be an invigorating one. It was a tragedy for the Anglo-German connection that Henry Maty died early in the next year, 1787. If the Greco-Gothic divide existed, he was a Greek; and his sympathy for classical dignity and austerity would have given him a vantage point

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1. New Review, IX (1786), p.124.

point of criticism in the next decade when so much Sturm und Drang excess came through the translations.

It was typical of his caustic good sense that when Holcroft's translation of the Countess of Montolieu's Caroline of Lichtfeld, from the French, appeared that year, 1786, Maty dismissed it with:

> I am sorry however to see, that an interesting narrative and a tolerable style, should be able to gain attention to improbable events, worn-out situations, unnatural characters, and trite sentiments.[1]

The book is a salacious but virtuous account of how a lovely young girl falls truly in love with a noble, glass-eyed hunchback, rejecting a handsome but shallow youth. As it has certain Gothic undertones the divided reactions of the three magazines are interesting indications of their critical standards. The European Magazine gave a long synopsis of the plot with little other comment. The Edinburgh Magazine quite failed to admit that its one page short story - Albertina From The Secret History of the Count of - was an even shorter synopsis of the same Caroline of Li chtfeld, though it did mention that, in its Albertina form, it was taken from the pages of Nicolas de Bonneville's Choix de petits Romans imités de l'Allemand.[2]

This slight episode is an indication of the growing eclectic complexity of the European literary scene: a lady with an exotic title writes, in French, a novel about a girl with a German sounding title. The whole is condensed, under a more suggestive title, by a Frenchman and issued in a collection purporting to be of German authorship. The Frenchman, on a mission to penetrate Masonic secrets, sells the story to a Scottish magazine. If any plain conclusion can be drawn it is that, in France, in the mid 1780s, about four years before the fashion came to Britain,

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1. New Review, IX (1786) p.184-185.
2. Dédiés à la Reine (Paris 1786). It was intended to be the first volume of a new series but Adrian Chrétien Friedel's death terminated the scheme.

a German cachet had become a selling point for a certain kind of novel, but that such novels were not, at that time, truly German. The previous, third volume of the Edinburgh Magazine, in the number for March 1786, had featured Peter, A German Tale[1]. There was nothing German about this: a good old man, observing the starry heavens, relates to his happy grandchildren the story of how he married, with difficulties, for love. This suggests that Sibbald, the editor, felt at that date that a sentimental story would be more acceptable to a Scottish reader if the reader believed that it was German.

Such a movement in periodicals of the 1780s could have been the breeding ground for the rather mysteriously motivated German fashion of the 1790s; but where this fashion of the periodicals had its source it is hard to say unless the editors, by their general habit of filling in an empty corner with a Gessner Idyl, accustomed their readers to the tender, sentimental flavour of 'German' material.

In their December numbers of 1786 both the Edinburgh and the European magazines printed Mackenzie's review of Robert Burn's poems from the October number of his own magazine, The Lounger. So Mackenzie's close connection with Sibbald's magazine is established. The review was generous. After quoting from Burns's Visions he wrote:

> Of strains like the above, solemn and sublime, with that rapture and inspired melancholy, in which the poet lifts his eye 'above this visible diurnal sphere', the poems entitled Despondency, The Lament, Winter a Dirge, and the Invocation to Ruin afford no less striking examples.[2]

and the poems which he selected for particular praise afford a striking indication of Mackenzie's own taste in poetic mood.

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, III (1786), p.205.
2. Ibid, IV, p.371-375.

As Mackenzie passed into the year 1787, the admired champion of wild and natural genius, Maty was dying of 'a lingering illness'. But he had completed his translation of Riesbeck and, whether he intended the book as a warning to his countrymen or a welcoming trumpet call to the new drama, Travels though Germany was published in March 1787.

The book was in three volumes of tooled leather with gilt lettering, far above the usual standards of book production but not unusual for that of translations from the German. These seem at that period to have tended to coffee-table presentation standards. Gottlieb Grellman's Dissertation on the Gipsies (London, 1787), translated by Matthew Roper, was even more lavishly produced, with superb illustrations by Callot. Both books were published by Cadell. Riesbeck was not likely to have pleased the Radical Joseph Johnson.

Riesbeck makes no secret of his prejudices. Though a native German he is in favour of elegant French culture. He dislikes the Roman Catholic Church, brothels and any kind of sexual immorality, drunkenness, students and, with some reservations, the new German theatre. What is refreshing about his book is his lively sense of humour and his refreshing lack of respect; what makes his criticisms of the German theatre so convincing is his obvious patriotism and desire that his country should excel by what he sees as European standards. The book is written in the form of a series of letters as he moves around the Empire, anti-clockwise, starting and ending near Cologne. His theatrical criticism is concentrated in four letters: one, the most insulting and amusing , on the theatre in South Germany, the second on the Viennese theatre, which comes nearest to his ideal of French professionalism, the third on the laughable economies of theatrical Berlin, and the last, written in puzzled admiration, on Weimar and its literary firmament. A curiosity of the book is that, though it never mentions Schiller by name, much of the first account

of theatrical standards seems to be a deliberate attack on him.

He sees the Germans as 'struck with a rage for theatrical exhibition'[1]

> that part of the German public with which I have had the honour to be acquainted hitherto, admire and most violently applaud those scenes which show the madman in his wildest transports. They are plays in which the chief character successively murders from twelve to fifteen people; and by way of crowning the meritorious deed, plants a dagger in his own breast.....
> I have often seen no less than five people dying at once on the German stage, one ringing out his knell with his feet, another with his arms, a third with his belly and a fourth with his head, whilst the pit seemed agonizing with joy, especially if the sport lasted, and clapped every convulsive movement.[2]

This is not literary criticism, but it is something much more telling, in a vein of good humoured slap-stick somewhere between Fielding and Dickens, very close in fact to the description of Hamlet in Great Expectations. It is human and readable. Riesbeck is the only writer to give the eighteenth century British any idea of what performances in Germany were actually like. Often his genre detail is charming, as in his account of the 'vagabond students and idle dissolute mechanics' who make up the bands of strolling players:

> they erect their stages in the barns, or in the cow houses of villages or market towns, and borrow the mayor's night gown or slippers, to play Julius Caesar in his toga, or, which is the same thing to them, to represent a sultan.[3]

For all his scorn for overacting he is a connoisseur of fine rant. Bergopzoomer in Vienna:

> ...one of the greatest charlatans, and, at the same time, one of the greatest workmen in his art I have yet seen ... Deeds of blood are his forte ... He puts on a great deal of false hair, which he tears off when he is in a passion, and tosses about the stage by handfuls. His wounds must bleed true blood: when he is in great passions he often spits blood---With all this, there is an

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1. Riesbeck, Travels through Germany, 3 vols. (London, 1787), i, 64.
2. Ibid, i, 65-66.
3. Ibid, i, 74.

> appearance of nature in his expression of the passions, that forces an adept in theatrical matters to forget all his trick and grimace. In the part of Camillo Rota, in Emilia Galotte,(14) he makes the whole pit shudder, without any motion of the arms or any alteration of the countenance, barely by speaking five or six words.[1]

which is enough to raise regret that he never saw Mrs Siddons to report on her. Berlin drew his contempt because there was no support there for native German literature, only for French, and Frederick himself could not speak German correctly. So, though he was for order and elegance, he was not for the slavish Francophiles. The Berlin theatre 'is so small that many of the spectators are obliged to take care lest the clouds of heaven over them should be entangled in their hair'; the manager, Dobbelin, 'places the strength of his company in the number of his actors, and seems to distribute the parts amongst them by lot ... Some of this great king's troops are carrion, whom hunger has robbed of all their flesh; and many are hardly able to move their arms or legs, for which want of action, the actresses are accountable, as you may easily discover by the sound of their voices.'[2]

His real anger is reserved for the playwrights:

> Most of the present writers for the German drama are as ignorant as the mob of the springs which activate mankind. Many of them are students, who are still at school, or just come from it, and have chosen play writing for their trade.
>
> These persons, who have never seen anything, sit in their chimney corner, and enveloped in the fumes of their tobacco, invent whatever happens to come uppermost. Their creatures have, consequently, neither beauty, shape, grace, or proportion; but are either men without heads or barbarians.[3]

He allows that Goethe 'is undoubtedly a genius' and even that Goetz of Berlichingen 'has very great beauties in it', though it has 'not

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, i, 295-96.
2. Ibid, iii, 51-52.
3. Ibid, i, 68.

yet been exhibited on the stage'; 'he can draw men in common life and walking on their legs, as well as those who stand on their heads'. But Riesbeck reveals his taste when he praises 'his Elvin and Elmire', 'an exquisite little opera'. Riesbeck is for the classical unities and blames Goethe for drawing German attention to Shakespeare 'as his example in his Goetz'. Goetz 'was a kind of magic wand which, with a single stroke, produced a hundred geniuses out of nothing'.[1]

> This ridiculous taste of desiring to excel by the neglect of order and rules, by the affectation of extravagance, unnatural events, abominable grimaces, and pitiful disfigurations, has since this time infected every department of literature and the arts.[2]

German, he believes, has only recently fallen into this artistic chaos:

> When we read the writings of Gessner, Wieland, and Lessing we perceive that it was improving under their culture, and would gradually have received the polish and perfection which are indispensably necessary to make it classical.[3]

He then particularises his objections, which prove to be chiefly grammatical:

> But these new geniuses have not been satisfied with the mutilation of single words, but have contracted whole periods in the same manner. They have abolished all conjunctions and connectives of every kind ... the sentences are all separate ... nor are any stops or divisions admitted except full stops, and !!! and ??? and - - -[4]

By this time Riesbeck has revealed his aesthetic stance very fairly. He has actually used the word 'classical'; he believes in order and form, established patterns of art and of human behaviour, particularly when this is portrayed by the arts. When Riesbeck attacks Goethe in these words:

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, i, 69-70.
2. Ibid, i, 71.
3. Ibid, i, 72.
4. Ibid, i, 72-73.

> In all things he is upon principle,for the natural, the extraordinary, the adventurous, the striking,and the bold, and has as great an aversion to the common form of government,as to the common rules of writing.[1]

he is making a shrewd, and very early definition of a Romantic Writer. He is also seeing him as his enemy because the cult of the Individual for which Goethe stands will inevitably work against the accepted order of Europe which Riesbeck, with certain cynical reservations, seems to approve. Riesbeck does not disapprove of the enormous wealth of Prince Esterhazy on principle; he only wishes that by the mild application of reason he would leave his puppet theatre for a while, use a little of his money to drain the neighbouring marshes and so, with all his tenants, escape the chattering ague that afflicts him. Riesbeck is a moralist because he loves order. Drunkenness and prostitution disturb order, so he dislikes them; when Drama seems likely to disturb the Platonic pattern of states or families, he dislikes that too. Even a gentle picturesque disorder irks him, as in his account of the suburban theatres of the Vienna Woods: 'The actors consist of taylors, periwig makers, apprentices,and ruined students. These gentlemen play by a kind of half light,favourable to the purposes of intrigue ... half the company is commonly in the ale house---one man acts three or four parts.'[2] He might be describing the bucolic, first steps in drama of Shakespeare or Molière, but, because of the 'half life favourable to the purposes of intrigue', he is out of sympathy.

In his remorseless anti-clockwise motion Riesbeck arrives at last at Weimar: the source of everything that worries him yet the liveliest centre of the arts in the whole Empire. Conscious of its brilliance Riesbeck can still hardly control his distaste to find even the aristocracy

1. Riesbeck, Travels, ii, 213.
2. Ibid, i, 304.

tainted: 'the reigning duke carries popularity as well as philosophy almost too far. He puts himself on a level with all kinds of persons, and takes parts in private plays acted by his servants and the literati of his court.'[1]

The remainder of the fourteen page chapter is almost entirely devoted to the personalities of the duke's court. It is of real importance because it is an account of the German Romantic Movement from the point of view of a hostile classicist. Readable like most of Riesbeck's writing, it is sometimes vituperative yet contrives throughout to seem the view of a reasonable man because it is often generous to the enemy.

From the start Riesbeck is obliged to admit that the du chy is prosperous and justly governed and that the Duke is popular. But, 'the wonderful character of this duke, the romantic part of it only excepted, for which he has to thank Mr. Gothe (sic) is the work of the celebrated Wieland. Wieland is, without a doubt, the first of all the German writers.'[2]

This would not surprise a British reader as Wieland had been popular in England, in an undramatic way, since 1773. But Riesbeck expresses his own standards of literature rather unimpressively in his account of Wieland. First he values scholarship: 'No writer, Lessing alone excepted, unites so much study with so much genius as he does'.[3] Yet Riesbeck, himself an entertaining writer, complains that he 'exposes his immense reading too much, and often forgets that his reader may not be so enamoured with his erudition as he is himself.'[4] Yet 'he has the true smack of art', 'a workman who is thorough master of his own business, and has a manner

1. Riesbeck, Travels, ii, 207.
2. Ibid, ii, 208.
3. Ibid, ii, 208.
4. Ibid, ii, 209.

of his own'. 'He has not only formed and fixed his taste on a thorough acquaintance with the beauties of the ancient writers, but possesses also all the literature of France, Italy and England.'[1]

Riesbeck may consider Wieland 'the first of all the German writers' but the impression he gives of his work is not substantial: 'he is most fruitful in the invention of trifles', and the only work of Wieland to which he refers, his literary journal, sounds far from scholarly: 'Riddles, newspapers, anecdotes, literary quarrels, every thing, in a word, is crammed in that may give his wares the appearance of novelty, or amuse the people.'[2]

When he turns to the personal gossip, which Riesbeck clearly enjoys, the Wieland image is still tarnished. He has 'seven or eight fine children', but he is greedy for money, irresolute and unworldly. Though his Agathon 'contains every evolution and revolution of the female mind, and like his other works, bespeaks one of the politest writers that ever existed'[3], he does not know how to make easy conversation with women.

Wieland's relations with Goethe are related, showing the former as flattering and cowardly. He had attacked Goethe's 'Goss' of Berlichingen but when Goethe struck back with a satire 'endeavoured to make his peace in a second number'. Riesbeck dismisses the man he claims to admire with:

> Upon the whole, he is one of the greatest sophists of our days, who has always a satire, or an apology ready, and produces that which brings him the most pence.[4]

With supporters like this, Wieland did not need enemies. The impression

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, p. 208.
2. Ibid, p.210.
3. Ibid, p.211.
4. Ibid, p.213.

Riesbeck gives of most people and places in his book is one of cheerful disrespect, but when he turns to Goethe he alternates between anger and respect. Riesbeck died young, of a fever at Aran in Switzerland in 1786, aged thirty. It seems likely that, had he lived longer, his own lively nature might have overcome his ar istocratic conservatism and brought him over to the Romantics.

He admits from the start that Goethe 'is not only a genius, but possesses a great deal of learning'.[1] It is the casual indifference to grammatical forms in Goethe's writing which disturbs Riesbeck:

> ... he rather affected graceful negligence than any laboured delicacy. He shortened all his periods in the most extraordinary manner, used common and vulgar words,and, what was of no great service to the poor German language, already so bare of them, cut off half of the vowels,and introduced pauses and strokes of admiration at every three words.[2]

Against this he admires Goethe's 'knowledge of mankind, united to a strong and fertile imagination, and a great vein of humour', it seems that he has Wieland's virtues and none of his faults: 'Goethe has read a great deal, is well acquainted with the best ancient and modern writers, paints, understands music, is a good companion and wit and - counsellor of legation to the duke.'[3]

The picture which is emerging, despite Riesbeck's hostility, is of a state in a condition of idyllic experiment. As if aware of this Riesbeck turns to the nature of Romanticism and its dependence upon Rousseau's ideas, trying to attack Goethe by the physical consequences of his beliefs since his poetry appears impregnable. The followers of Goethe 'imagined that nothing more was requisite to become a genius

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, ii, 213.
2. Ibid, p. 214.
3. Ibid, p.215.

than to be bold, impudent and careless of language and style, and to entertain contempt for everything that is called order or regularity.' 'A true genius required no education, but had all the powers of creation in himself' ... 'real judgement only made asses of men ... an unrestrained imagination raised them to the rank of divinities.'[1] While it is perfectly fair for Riesbeck to accuse Romanticism of having these destructive tendencies it is tempting at this point to ask him to particularise, to say 'Yes, but what do they actually do wrong?'

The answer apparently is:

> They taught, that to roll in snow, to bathe in cold water, to leap like bucks about the steepest precipices, to eat nothing warm, but to live entirely on the fruits of the earth, not to give the least interruption to the operations of nature, but even to drop the excrement standing, at any time and in any place, was all that could be done by man, either for the preservation or recovery of his health'.[2]

and if that seems a little remote from the consequences of writing, Riesbeck asserts that Goethe's physician backed his prescriptions by telling patients 'that the great Goethe went into the cold bath in frost and snow.'[3] A quick change in the next line links all this with Romantic painting

> 'The young painters, too, would for some time paint nothing but storms, lightning, tops of Apennines, or Alps; elephants, lions and tygers; Didos on the funeral pile, Lucretias and Medeas murdering their children ... Art, according to their definition, consists in what is out of the common course.'[4]

The sum of this would seem to an English Pre-Romantic more like a description of a modern Medicean Florence than of a disastrous aesthetic

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, p. 215.
2. Ibid, ii, 217.
3. Ibid, p.217.
4. Ibid, p217-18.

experiment. It is surprising that it did little to make Goethe an object of curiosity in England, but the cost of the three volumes and the distorted cutting of the reviews related to Goethe must have muted Riesbeck's impact.

Mackenzie was far more concerned to defend Schiller. This could have been because he had detected Riesbeck's hidden attack on Schiller, an attack so contemptuous that he refused to mention Schiller's name. It occurs in Letter Eight of the first volume.

Riesbeck describes the artistic crucifixion of his friend Marchand, manager of the court theatre at Mannheim. He began with a conventional group of actors, 'regular bred men, paid them with great punctuality, and as regularly discharged them when they were guilty of any irregularity. By these means he and his company obtained the respect of the public.' 'he exhibited only translations of the most select French and English pieces, and the very best originals of his own country'.[1] A picture in fact of provincial dullness,but Riesbeck chooses to admire it. Then disaster struck: 'the rage for tragedy and monsters prevailed; after long struggling against it, he was at last obliged to yield to the stream. As the lungs of his actors ... could not go through the strong convulsive movements of the new school, he was obliged, on his arrival at Munich, to procure a new set,accustomed to howlings, laying dead, & etc & etc.'[2] Riesbeck, having described what sounds suspiciously like the re-invigoration of a stale old theatrical manager by a new wave of talent, concludes 'It is probable,however, that the present rage is only a paroxysm of the stage fever, which will in time give way to better taste and sounder judgement'.[3]

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, i, 75.
2. Ibid, p.76.
3. Ibid, p.76.

Both Riesbeck and Schiller were natives of Wurtemberg, Schiller, in Riesbeck's eyes, would have betrayed his class and his state. Die Räuber was first publicly performed at Mannheim, Marchand's theatre, and there is little doubt that this 'rage for tragedies and monsters' which Riesbeck mentions disdainfully, is his covert way of sneering at the play which Mackenzie made the centre of his Address.

Riesbeck's Travels through Germany was a gage, a challenge thrown down by the Classicists. But in Britain in 1787 there were no real Romantics ready yet to pick it up, only the uncertain Pre-Romantics, men like Mackenzie who had written nothing of real Romantic stature, but whose Man of Feeling was at least a clear statement of individuality, and who had recognised a Romantic poet when a rough tenant farmer was introduced to him.

Three expensive volumes of limited circulation might have been ignored, but the periodicals, by their presentation of Riesbeck's reactionary attack in their review columns made a defence of Romantic drama imperative if destructive laughter was to be silenced and these fruitful excesses of the spirit given a trial in Britain.

The editors of both the European and the Edinburgh Magazine had by their recent record, shown some sympathy to the call for Romantic disorder in literature. In the year of R sbeck's publication they both published a telling attack on the mannered language of Gray: 'The rosy bosomed hours waking the purple year, forms a splendid confusion of imagery that no painter could draw, and that no man of sense can understand.'[1] 'Otranto' in the Edinburgh Magazine declared of the Gothic

> That mixture of ferocity and kindness, of religion and barbarity, of romantic love, inflexible honour and wild enterprize, opens so many happy sources of poetical invention as perhaps can no

1. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.295. European Magazine, XII (1787), p.264.

> where else be found. We are weary to hear the chiming of some few soft names, borrowed from the poets of antiquity:
>
> Woods that wave o'er Delphi's steep
> Isles that crown th' Aegean deep;
>
> Those classic haunts are now all laid open, contr i ted and worn bare, as the public walks of a city. The regions of romance remain, like some awful forest, as yet imperfectly explored, inviting the enthusiastic wanderer to the enjoyment of new grandeur and beauty.[1]

Yet, probably on the adage that nothing boosts circulation so much as a good fight, both editors gave Riesbeck an extensive review, deliberately cutting their quotations to make them as offensive as possible to the new German drama. The eleventh volume of the European Magazine carries, in its April 1787 number, what can only be described as an editorial hiccup. There are clear signs that the reviewer of Riesbeck was preparing to cut him off after a fair review of average length when the Editor, appreciating the controversial nature of the book, ordered a fuller and immediate coverage later in the same number.

Its first review was of three pages, repeating the 'madmen, murderers and drunkards' gibe. It mentioned, uneasily

> that degagé vivacity, and desultory, but pleasing spirit of badinage, which by many are considered as peculiar to a Frenchman, and which, whether peculiar to him or not, or whether, indeed, always proper, in the degree of wantonness to which he is apt to carry them, are by no means surely characteristic of a German.[2]

speaks of 'the work before us, of which the most striking feature is its eccentricity'[3], mentions the feats, 'to us hardly credible', of Bergopzoomer, and ends with apparent relief at 'the necessity of postponing an account of the remaining two volumes to our next.'[4]

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, V (1787), p.302 "On the revival of the old Romance".
2. European Magazine, XI (1787), p.251.
3. Ibid p. 253
4. Ibid, p.253

Yet twenty pages later in the same April issue, under the heading 'Pictures of the Manners and Characters of the Germans' it returns to Riesbeck with six pages of double columns of extracts, including the vituperative picture of the theatre in South Germany, where Die Räuber was first performed. It omits the Weimar passage in the second volume. These extracts would humanly, though not critically, be more damning because next to the South German passages is set one of Riesbeck's more amusing anti-Catholic anecdotes, illustrating the squalor and superstition of the Bavarians.

It describes a lewd tavern where a priest is roistering with his flock. A drunken fight breaks out:

> Everything in short seemed to speak blood and death; when, on the ringing of the bell for evening prayer
> 'Ave Marie ye -!' cried the priest, and down dropped their arms, they pulled off their bonnets, folded their hands and repeated their Ave Marie.[1]

This ended, they return to battle and the priest takes refuge under the table.

The Edinburgh Magazine ensured a wide Scottish currency for this reactionary, and grossly unfair, literary viewpoint by putting together into one eight column article the two most violent of Riesbeck's attacks: those on the South German theatre and on Gothe's (sic) influence in Weimar.[2]

This last passage, one of great importance, as it was the first time that readers of British periodicals had ever heard of the most hopeful literary movement in contemporary Europe, was wilfully distorted by editing. The pieces which ridiculed Goethe from the first and second volumes of Riesbeck were cut out and put together to read like a continuous

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1. European Magazine, XI (1787), p.275.
2. The Edinburgh Magazine, V (1787), p.256-63.

attack. In the original Weimar letter the remarks on 'the grateful negligence' of Goethe's style conclude with a generous compliment:

> His writings contain a great deal of that happy seizure of circumstance which bespeaks a knowledge of mankind united to a strong and fertile imagination and a great vein of humour.[1]

Edinburgh cut this out. It was praise as rich as Mackenzie heaped on Burns and it is curious that the Edinburgh Magazine should keep it from Goethe. It is likely that it was done simply because he was the author of Werther, and a notably God-fearing society had still not forgiven him this. Even the well balanced Maty in 1783 had blamed Captain von Arenswald's death by 'the vapour of gunpowder'on 'reading The Sorrows of Werther.' But this biased editing for the benefit of Goethe-haters is serious. To attempt to decide, at this point in the twentieth century what influences British writers needed in the 1790s would be an unprofitable literary game. The fact that Goethe was the major figure in the German resurgence does not necessarily mean that he would have been a profitable influence in contemporary Britain. But he had great qualities and it is indisputable that he received very little critical attention in Britain at a time when several lesser German writers received a great deal of attention. In 1787 Riesbeck's book gave his brilliance at least partial recognition. The Edinburgh Magazine deliberately hid this and so must take part of the blame for the ill balanced reaction of Britain to German writing in the next decade.

This was in its April number. In October it began that process of surrounding Schiller's name with cheap and probably lying sensationalism which was to result in his plays being censored by the Licenser's Office for the rest of the century.

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1. Riesbeck, Travels, ii, 214.

The article, 'Remarkable Effect, produced by the Representation of a Tragedy in Germany'[1], was another piece of Sibbald's irresponsible cutting and composing. It consists of two separate pieces on Schiller, both written by De Bonneville, the first from Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, Volume Twelve (1785), the second from Choix de Petits Romans Imités de l'Allemand (1786). Using exactly the same unscrupulous journalistic techniques as he employed on Riesbeck's account of Goethe, Sibbald cut out the last piece of the Nouveau Théâtre article, which contains Schiller's own account of his state of mind when he wrote Die Räuber and his partial disclaimer of the whole play's ethos. In its place he tacked a circumstantial gossipy passage describing details of the students' revolt which Die Räuber is alleged to have inspired at Fribourg. This last is taken from Choix de Petits Romans.[2]

As a direct result of this shrewd but corrupt editing Mackenzie was to open his 1788 Address with the words, 'Everybody has heard the anecdote ...'. The article opens: 'M Schiller, whose Tragedy of The Robbers had extraordinary success on all the German theatres when the representation of it was permitted.'[3] This, in capital letters, is the first open reference to Schiller in Britain, and by linking him from the very first line to the likely need for censorship: 'where the representation of it was permitted', it is openly calling the attention of Larpent, the Lord Chamberlain's censor, to Schiller's plays before a word of them has been translated into English. Such is the mischief that irresponsible journalism can cause.

What follows is almost as dangerous, but a threat this time to the language and philosophy of criticism. First comes a confident

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.225
2. N. de. Bonneville, Choix de Petits Romans (Paris, 1786), p.133.
3. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.225.

expectation of genius. Schiller, it writes:

> is none of those people that, like fashionable songs, are praised by all the world for a time, however despicable their merit may be. He is a young writer, who seems made to astonish the age, some time or other, with the vigour of his genius. His fortunes will be diligently attended by every person of taste.[1]

Then in an ominous foreshadowing of Mackenzie's response of combined horror and admiration, it continues:

> His pieces, taken together, and even the separate scenes of them, are in the very worst taste; but the sublime strokes they abound with, and especially a horrible kind of interest, that, in spite of ourselves we are obliged to take in them, attaches us to scenes to the last degree terrifying.[2]

This is only in brief what Mackenzie was to say at length. On this one page a legend is born and the German 'Mania', using 'mania' deliberately to imply suspension of normal reasoning facul ties,is born. This is corrupt but enticing critical language. 'The very worst taste' is promised in the same breath as 'sublime strokes'. If the sublime can mingle with bad taste then Burke's theory has been pressed a stage further than he ever intended it. In fact, of course, the language is only De Bonneville's introduction to Les Voleurs translated. The first British reaction to a serious Sturm und Drang play was really a French reaction.

De Bonneville - Sibbald hastens, just like Mackenzie a year later, to cover his moral tracks with a dis claimer: 'Whatever opinons may be broached by the speculatist, it is certain that virtue is never attained by guilty means; but such is the effect of a paradox specially decked out, that a great number of these young people.....'[3], and so on, predictably.

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.225.
2. Ibid, p.225.
3. Ibid, p.226.

The final half of the Fribourg story, from Choix de Petits Romans, telling how the Principal returned by chance at night, heard whispering and discovered a paper of the plot, is told with a journalist's zest. 'Such terrible effects prove the amazing energy of M.Schiller's pen.' In reality they proved the energy of M. de Bonneville's imagination:

> On avait encore projetté d'enlever Mademoiselle de ...., d'une beauté rare, et d'une famille très-illustre. On devoit faire cet enlèvement à la promenade publique, le pistolet à la main, et se retirer ensuite dans les forêts.[1]

The final touch appears designed by Sibbald to provoke letters from 'Indignant Edinburgheinsis' to his Reader's Column. The last sentence on Schiller reads 'He has also published the Prospectus of a moral periodical work, which he means soon to begin'. This also, however, is from De Bonneville's Petits Romans.

The impact of the article would have been wholly different if Sibbald had thought his readers were mature enough to understand Schiller's own impassioned and moving explanation of earlier states of mind which De Bonneville had attached to Les Voleurs in Nouveau Théâtre Allemand. It is probable that Sibbald was disturbed by the political implication of Schiller's opening:

> J'écris comme citoyen du monde. Je ne sers aucun Prince: de bonne heure J'ai perdu ma patrie pour l'echanger contre le genre humain, que je connossois à peine en imagination. Un singulier malentendu de la Nature m'avoit condamné à me faire Poëte dans la Ville où j'étois né (à Würtemberg)[2]

Before condemning the nervous British patriotism which mistrusted a phrase like 'citoyen du monde', it should be remembered that French editors were less cautious and three years later France was involved

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1. Choix de Petits Romans (Paris, 1786), p.133.
2. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, XII (1785), p.13.

in a violent revolution wherein the same phrase was commonly used.

Schiller makes it quite clear that the institution he worked in and the state of which he was a subject had reduced him to an unnatural state of mind, 'mon coeur s'égaroit dans un monde idéal, ne connoissant ni le monde réel dont j'étois séparé par des liens de fer, et des murs de ténébres impénétrables, ni les nobles penchans des êtres libres, livrés à eux-mêmes.'[1] As a result he produced Die Räuber which he now sees as 'un monstre qui heuresement n'existoit pas; auquel je ne souhaiterois l'immortalité que pour éterniser l'example d'une production enfantée par la subordination et le génie, union qui répugne à la Nature. Je parle des Voleurs.'[2]

This explains, if it does not excuse, the hypnotic confusion of Good and Evil in Karl Moor; and it leaves Schiller a human being at the same time as it labels his creation a monster.

It is puzzling that the Edinburgh Magazine avoided this passage, but that Mackenzie himself in his address should show no awareness of it is baffling in the extreme. Even there the mystery of its supression does not end. None of the play's reviewers in the1790s, when Tytler's transation had come out (1792), seems to be aware that the surging paradoxes of the play have not simply been explained but virtually apologised for by the author himself. It is as if they preferred to think that the exciting horrors of the play remained a valid comment on society and had not been analysed by its author as an adolescent's mental agony. The only source for Schiller's self explanation would have been the twelve volumes of Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, and these are unlikely to have been easily available. Only the editors of periodicals could have circumvented

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1. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, Vol.xii(Paris,1785),p.14.
2. Ibid p.14.

this and it appears that, though there could have been no organised conspiracy of unenlightenment, Schiller and Karl Moor pleased the British better as Gothic monsters from a foreign country than as an unhappy young man and his cris de coeur. There was a disposition, it seems, in Britain at this period to accept horror as horror but not horror as a symbol or even as a sympton. This is literary unsophistication and it is a fair generalisation to say that, for all its self-satisfaction, indeed because of it, the 1780s were an unusually unsophisticated period in drama and poetry in this country, and the novel was more interested in weaving mystery than in examining human motivation. It is a pity that Cowper, Jerningham, Aikin and the other versifiers of the eighties were not given Schiller's 'la passion pour la Poésie est terrible et dévorante comme le premier amour. Ceux qui croyoient l'étouffer, l'ont entretenue brûlante'[1], its crudity might have provoked a reaction, but the fact that it was not made current marks the time as Pre-Romantic rather than Romantic.

The sequence of events which led Mackenzie to deliver his Address appears to have been:

1783 Dugald Stewart became friendly in Paris with De Bonneville, editor of N.T.A.

1785 The full editions of N.T.A. and T.A. published in Paris.

1786 Reviews of T.A. in British journals. De Bonneville in Edinburgh.

1787 March. Riesbeck's Travels published, attacking the German theatre.

1787 April. British journals concentrate Riesbeck's attack in reviews.

1787 October. The Edinburgh Magazine prints the anecdote of the student revolt in Fribourg.

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1. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, XII (1785), p.13.

Since Henry Mackenzie, in default of another champion, was virtually manoeuvred into giving the Address of 1788, since he had not read The Robbers either in the original German or in English and since he seemed not even to have read Schiller's comment on the circumstances and significance of the play's composition, the actual Address which he gave to the Royal Society of Edinburgh is likely to have been more in the nature of a staged event than an informed lecture.

Other reservations suggest themselves around the nature of the publicity it received. One of the Sturm und Drang plays which he praised in the Address, on its English showing a particularly bad one, Agnes of Bernau by Graf von Torring, had a few of its scenes published in July of the same year in the Edinburgh Magazine.[1] The dialogue of the translation was pretentious and wooden; the play was never attempted again in English in that century. After that there was complete silence on the subject of the Address until two years after Mackenzie had delivered it. This apparently was out of courtesy to the Royal Society, which then published it in its Translations of that year. In 1790 it was also printed in the Edinburgh Magazine and the Hibernian Magazine. The Literary Magazine and British Review printed it twice: in 1791 and 1792. The Sentimental and Masonic Magazine of Dublin printed it in 1792. Most of the established periodicals referred to it during the 1790s.

Mackenzie's friend, Alexander Fraser Tytler, Historian of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, brought out an excellent translation of The Robbers, but that was in 1792, almost five years after Mackenzie's praise of Les Voleurs. Mackenzie himself probably published a translation of two German and one French play: Dramatic pieces from the German

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1. Edinburgh Magazine, VIII (1788), p.48-51.

(Edinburgh 1792);[1] but neither Goethe's The Sister or Ayrenhoff's The Set of Horses was much noticed.

Mackenzie seems to have known very little about the German theatre and his taste in the plays which he knew in translation was fallible. F.W. Stokoe seems uneasy about the Address, concluding, 'it is at least safe to affirm that he hit upon the psychological moment for his pronouncement.'[2] But this seems anything but a safe affirmation since the play he praised most had to wait another five years for a translation and Schiller, the author whom he most admired, gained such a reputation in Britain for Radical destructiveness that none of his plays was ever publicly performed in the eighteenth century. The Speculator (London, 1790) was much more scholarly than Mackenzie and a little better informed. It was also printed just before Mackenzie's Address. It seems quite possible that much of the fame which has gathered around the 1788 event stems simply from Walter Scott's conversation with Lockhart. Scott was a great fancier of his own youth and a treasurer of its significant moments. He claimed that Mackenzie's paper set him onto a literary career and studying German. Since he began his German studies under Dr Willich in 1792, that should be accepted with reserve.

One thing emerges from the Address and that is Mackenzie's real pleasure in Les Voleurs. He enjoyed its events and he relished its style. His translations of the scene on the banks of the Danube and the final sacrifices of Amelia establish that. Romantic taste is notoriously elusive of definition and Mackenzie's own, much earlier, The Man of Feeling

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1. The publication was anonymous. Public Characters 1802-3 relates that Mackenzie was taught German by a Dr Okely and that the translations were a joint effort; the two plays are quite short. Modern Language Review, XXVII Oct. (1922), p.412 agrees that Mackenzie was the author. Allibones Dictionary unhelpfully attributes the plays to Lessing!.
2. F.W. Stokoe, German Influence in the English Romantic Period (Cambridge, 1926), p.32.

is as helpful as anything to suggest why Mackenzie gave the Address and why he took so much pleasure in works which he knew only superficially, yet wanted many others to enjoy.

The Man of Feeling gives the impression of being an intensely personal statement. Rightly or wrongly the reader feels that Harley is Mackenzie. The personality which emerges is that of an earlier Huysmans: someone wholly self conscious and able to stand back from life and savour anything, from a last view of native hills: 'he penciled them on the clouds and bade them farewell with a sigh',[1] to the lewd squalor of a brothel. There is more than a touch of De Sade in Mackenzie. Harley pretends to object to a visit to Moorfields lunatic asylum: 'I think it an inhuman practice to expose the greatest misery with which our nature is afflicted to every idle visitant who can afford a trifling perquisite to the keeper'[2]. but he still goes with the party and enjoys the gross emotional self indulgence of comforting a young girl who had lost her lover in the West Indies and run distract:

> 'My Billy is no more!' said she, do you weep for my Billy? Blessings on your tears. I would weep too but my brain is dry; and it burns, it burns, it burns!' - She drew nearer to Harley - 'Be comforted, young Lady', said he, 'Your Billy is in Heaven.'[3]

She sings, 'Light be the earth on Billy's breast/And green the sod that wraps his grave'. They exchange rings and all cry.

A man who could indulge himself like this could take a kind of pleasure from the scene where Karl Moor stabs Ame lia to death, and particularly from the self congratulatory tone of the stage direction - 'Struck with the barbarous heroism of the dead, his associates fall at his feet.'[4]

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1. H. Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling (London, 1771), p.29.
2. Ibid, p.53.
3. Ibid, p.63
4. Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol.2 (Edinburgh, 1790), p.190.

Harley - Mackenzie has an intense sympathy for human suffering and a shocking relish for it. Mad girls, old tramps, virtuous women raped while they are fainting, they are all grist to Mackenzie's melancholy mill; and over it all there is a feeling of profound vanity or self concern, he is the final connoisseur of himself; that surely is the trick Goethe caught from him and used to write The Sorrows of Werter with: this pleasure in his own gloom,

> 'It rains, Sir', answered the servant, 'with an easterly wind'
> 'Easterly for ever' - He made no other reply but shrugged up his shoulders till they almost touched his ears, wrapped himself tight in his great coat, and disappeared.[1]

What may have drawn Mackenzie to give the Address could be a combination of vanity - Scotland's greatest writer of forbidden things reaches out to a fellow spirit across the cold North Sea - and a feeling of real kinship for a writer who could take pleasure in human misery for the very best of Radical motives. Harley and Karl Moor are not worlds apart; both are Radical, both are sad introverts.

The Address itself it not easy to précis: it has no resounding or aphoristic perceptions of Romantic truths and, when it comes to individual plays, it is appreciative rather than keen. But it divides easily into three parts. The first part is his 'Poetics', an uncertain attempt at a new theory of tragedy for a new kind of tragic writing. Then comes an uneven ramble through playwrights representative of the new German theatre. The third part, the most emotionally effective, delivered in a different register to the first two thirds, is an account of Schillers Robbers.

His 'Poetics' opens with an analysis of the German literary scene, fitting it to the theories of Rousseau.

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1. The Man of Feeling, p.83.

> The prevalence of highly refined sentiment seems commonly the attendant of newly introduced literature, when letters are the property of a few secluded men, and have not yet allied themselves to the employments or the feelings of society ... the natural result of fancy and feeling, untutored by a knowledge of the world, or the intercourse of ordinary life.[1]

Truth is not relevant to the growth of a legend, this is not a helpful analysis of contemporary Germany, but Mackenzie amuses himself by visualising Schiller in terms of Robert Burns. This may be why he ignored Schiller's ruthless self analysis in the Nouveau Theâtre Allemand.

Then Pres byterian Scotland taps him on the shoulder and he falters: 'the scene is sullied with murder and disfigured with madness as often as that of the ancient English tragedy'. He rallies as he recalls the sentimental outpourings of Agnes Bernau, 'in point of tenderness and passion,a performance of very high merit', but stumbles again as he remembers his audience and the fact that Agnes is drowned on stage, pushed under the Danube as she tries to escape, 'in a manner as repugnant to the delicacy or dignity of theatrical situation as can well be imagined'.[2]

The situation in Edinburgh must have been one of as much drama as Agnes ever endured. Plainly Mackenzie enjoyed these horrors and his disclaimers are hypocritic al. But he is in a city which snowed a blizzard of angry pamphlets on the moral daring of Home's Douglas as recently as 1754. By tactical tears and sympathy he escaped much censure himself in 1771, but with the new Germans he has still to tread carefully in 1788. It was his record of evading moral attack which fitted him to give the Address.

From drowned Agnes, Mackenzie moves easily to the claim that a writer in a state of excitement is above rules:

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1. Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, p.158.
2. Ibid, p.159.

> There are moments of peculiar warmth of imagination and felicity of language,which, in the course of a work where fancy is indulged beyond the bounds of rigid critical rule, a writer may experience above the level of his ordinary powers.[1]

His language is not clear but the point is important, even revolutionary. 'Rigid critical rule' is probably an evasive way of saying 'the normal moral standards of my listeners'; but he is careful not to give instances of the kind of 'imagination' and 'fancy' which he is thinking of. The real weakness in his thinking is that he never expands upon 'felicity of language'. Does he believe that a revolutionary situation is needed to produce a revolutionary language?

After a safe interlude listing the contents of the two Théâtre Allemand collections, Mackenzie returns to danger to suggest that events take place in the plays which are above the reader's ordinary intelligence. They show a force which the reader does not always readily allow, and become motives to a conduct of which he does not always perceive the necessity or the use.'[2] There is no further justification, just that 'the metaphysical refinements of sentiment' sometimes remove characters from the sympathy of the audience. This is a high handed style. What Mackenzie is saying is that distressful actions and outrageous characters should be accepted if, his implication is, the language of the play is sufficiently fine.

At this point Mackenzie becomes cunning rather than subtle. Dr Johnson was a reassuring figure,so he reminds his audience that Johnson was prepared to suspend his sense of time and place 'when the curtain is down and the music plays'. Therefore, Mackenzie implies, we should be similarly ready to suspend our moral judgements during a play. Then

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1. Transactions of the R.S. of E. Vol. 2, p.159.
2. Ibid, p.164.

he appeals to the virility and toughness of his audience. Polite folk in Britain enjoy 'the sorrow that melts not the anguish that tears, the fear that agitates, not the terror that overwhelm s the soul'. But a German audience'does not allow for this delicacy of feeling'. In a German play 'its horrors and its distress assault the imagination and the heart of the reader with unsparing force.'[1]

This is an unimpressive attempt to suggest that the enjoyment of brutality is in some sense admirable, but the tell-tale word is 'reader'. No one had seen these plays. Mackenzie conceives them as closet drama, softened in the mind's privacy. To discuss a play which you have never seen performed is a satisfying mental exercise but an unreal one. Even today, performed in a bare room and by an inexperienced cast The Robbers is a disturbing experience forcing emotional gymnastics on the audience. It is at this point that Mackenzie is most Harley: because a disturbing experience is interesting to watch, it should be enjoyed, not justified.

> that sublimity and boldness of picture,which is often ill-exchanged for the flat insipid representation of restrained passion and chastened manners.[2]

In the central section of the Address Mackenzie almost makes a point for rich rather than for simple direct language: 'the words that glow will sometimes, as it were, create the thoughts that burn.'[3] But in his anxiety to include Riesbeck's social analysis of a typical German town he loses the point. The German classes do not mix and are sharply differentiated. In the 'dramas' (as opposed to the plain tragedies) the sufferings 'are rather of feeling than of situation' and therefore only likely to please people of 'an excessive and high strained delicacy

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1. Transactions vol. 2, p.167.
2. Ibid, p.168.
3. Ibid, p.171.

and sensibility'[1].' People of better informed judgements and more ripened taste' despise bombast but 'the less refined part of an ordinary audience[2], enjoys it.

This is contradictory but suggests that Mackenzie shares the cruder tastes and enjoys, himself, 'the words that glow'. The Man of Feeling confirms this.

The rudest shock of the Address comes when Mackenzie passes over Lessing and Goethe with limp praise to reveal his true favourite: 'Attelage de Poste by Colonel Emdorff, an officer in the Imperial Service.'[3] He enjoyed this light frothy comedy so much that he included it in 1792, in his Dramatic Pieces from the German. It is wholly conventional: the right officer marries the right girl, everyone is well connected, the older general behaves genially in character. It takes place in a German castle but with much French reference. Essentially it is a Viennese play and Baron Riesbeck would thoroughly have approved it.

The reason why Mackenzie praised it, just before he began his eulogy of the horrors of The Robbers, must be that this was what he enjoyed in the theatre; The Robbers was for his arm chair and the interior mind of a quiet reader. That was how it came to Coleridge one memorable night, and this is the reservation that should be made about most of the translations from the German in the 1790's. The plays were to be taken as brief novels, easy demonstrations in applied psychology. This would explain why they had so little effect on the English stage, they are adventures for the mind only. Mackenzie's decision to translate Goethe's Die Geschwister and Ayrenhoff's farce may be shrewder than

1. Transactions, Vol 2. p. 172.
2. Ibid, p.173.
3. No one has been able to explain why Mackenzie got Cornelius von Ayrenhoff, a Feldmarshall Lieutenant in the Austrian service's name wrong here and again five years later in Dramatic Pieces from the German.

at first appears. If the sexual, but domestic, daring of the one is combined with the crisp good humour and dextrous acceptability of the other the end product would be something akin to a typical Kotzebue play in translation and it was Kotzebue who succeeded with the British in the 1790s.

Finally Mackenzie turns to Les Voleurs, which he has hoarded to the end. It would be idle to deny his histrionic courage in doing this before that particular audience, one far more accustomed, by the record of the Transactions to learned lectures on physics or geography. Leaning heavily on De Bonneville, Mackenzie began his peroration:

> Captain of a band of inexorable and sanguinary banditti, whose furious valour he wields to the most desperate purposes; living with those associates, amidst woods and desarts, terrible and savage as the wolves they have displaced; this presents to the fancy a kind of preternatural personage, wrapped in all the gloomy grandeur of visionary beings.[1]

Romanticism is not about common sense. Allowing that, this passage must be considered an early and important chapter in English Romanticism, an inspiration to Beckford and a foundation for Byronism, part of the end of certainties in European literature. Schiller saw his play as an inspired monster and that is how Mackenzie delivered it to his Edinburgh audience. 'Paradox speciously decked out'[2] was De Bonneville's summary of Die Räuber, and it seems a fair judgement of that final passage of the play as the aphorisms smother sense and vaunt instinct in Mackenzie's own translation of it:

> To be great, Moor must be free. I would not give this triumph for all the Elysium of love. He draws his sword . Call not that madness of which your souls want strength to see the grandeur. The greatness of despair is above the ken of wisdom. On actions such as this, reflection must follow, not wisdom pause.
> (He plunges his sword into the bosom of Amelia. Struck with the barbarous heroism of the deed, his associates fall at his feet).[3]

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1. Transactions Vol. 2, p.182.
2. Edinburgh Magazine, VI (1787), p.225.
3. Transactions, Vol. 2 p.190.

It is a widening of possibilities to have a work like this placed in the British canon, something to be followed or rejected. It is a moral comment on the British theatre that it was rejected.

Just once in The Man of Feeling Mackenzie wrote a passage which, trivial as it is, reveals him as the elegant sadist who would respond excitedly to the sacrifice of Amelia. The writer was remembering his dead friend, Ben Stilton. The chair which he used to occupy was still in the crowded room:

> it was occupied by my young lady's favourite lap dog. I drew near unperceived, and pinched its ear in the bitterness of my soul; the creature howled, and ran to its mistress. She did not suspect the author of its misfortunes, but she bewailed it in the most pathetic terms, and, kissing its lips, laid it gently on her lap, and covered it with a cambric handkerchief.[1]

This is a comment on the man of 1771, who had now, in 1788, to attempt to persuade learned Edinburgh that what he saw as the literature of moral chaos was reputable. The next twelve years would show which was the more acceptable view on this issue: Riesbeck's or Mackenzie's.

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1. H. Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling (London, 1771), p.viii.

CHAPTER FIVE

The bias of France on Anglo-German writing - Thomas Holcroft's career as a translator

If there were ever any real hope of an ideal interchange, Thomas Holcroft promised more than any of the other four figures most involved in Anglo-German literary relations: Fuseli, Mackenzie, William Taylor or Matthew Lewis.

Fuseli was an outsider and an artist before he was a writer. Mackenzie and William Taylor both had brilliance within a limited range, but Mackenzie was seventeen years past his literary prime and Taylor suffered an extreme, and possibily justified, nervous diffidence about the range of his talent. Lewis was a vulgar, successful sensationalist and magpie borrower. Thomas Holcroft in 1784 would appear to have been perfectly placed to know the most impressive works of the new German theatre, to bring them over to the London theatres in translation and to use their style and mode of attack to create, himself, a new Radical theatre of comment and challenge.

All this is supposition. Though Holcroft was a very active translator of works originally written in German, little that he translated was of much significance. But an opportunity lost is almost as interesting as an opportunity taken. The failure of a literature in renaissance, like the German, to have much impact on a kindred literature in the doldrums, such as the English, is in itself fascinating. The guarded condition of English letters in the last half of the eighteenth century and its serene confidence about its own relative emptiness is a phenomenon. The almost unmitigated commercialism of its stage must bear most of the blame for the vacancy of the nineteenth century theatre. With unquestioned prestige and enthusiasm available, the lending libraries booming and the

theatres full, it is hard to explain the shortage of writing which would seem interesting to a later generation. Premature death, such as Chatterton's, will account for some of the hollow spaces, but sociological pressures seem the more likely cause, and Holcroft's is an almost perfect test case to examine a playwright working with apparent freedom of choice but within a constricting society.

Born in the same year as Mackenzie, 1745, Holcroft was thirty eight years old in 1783, when German literature first became open to him; but he had only been a writer for the last five years. He was working class in origin, self educated and a free thinker by temperament: a perfect blank, it would seem, to be stamped with the most current literary image. Though he was born in Leicester Fields London, his father was economically disturbed and travelled the roads as a wandering cobbler and pedlar between 1752-7. The son became a stable boy at Newmarket, 1757-6, and this, unfortunately, is the only period of his life properly covered by his forthright but incomplete Memoirs. It is possible to know exactly his sensations over a morning gallop on the heath or when faced with a bloody accident to a fellow stable lad, but what he thought when he first read Les Voleurs, or if indeed he read it at all, has to be supposed.

Prompting for the stage led him to become a strolling player for eight years, so he had a firm grounding in the practical theatre, here and in Ireland. This indoctrination in existing stagecraft, together with the fact that by 1777 he was three times married and with a family, could explain a strain of conservative conventionality in his mind which runs alongside his frequently expressed radicalism and atheism. He married again, a fourth wife, in 1799 and had children by all his last three wives, so the sobering necessity to earn money to support a large family was always with him. This may well have steered him from innovation at times; literary chances came to him when he was a little sunken in maturity.

He began to write, Manthorn, a novel, in 1778 and Duplicity, a play acted at Covent Garden, in 1781. The Preface and text of Duplicity offer at least suggestions of his literary stature in the period just before he was exposed to the German influence. The picture is conventional, even conformist, but there is a hint of a plausible, glib rogue and borrower in his remarks, suggesting that he might soon prove an ideal conductor of new ideas. He mentions some plots which the uncharitable might think he had filched for his play, but assures readers that he has done no such thing unless 'from latent ideas,of which I am unconscious'.[1] There is more than a touch of the English Literary Critic or self taught analyst in him. He brandishes the term Comédie Larmoyante, 'or,as we call it, Sentimental Comedy'[2] and traces the way Goldsmith's She stoops to conquer and Sheridan's School for Scandal attacked the genre: 'the success of the piece rouzed later writers from soft slumbers of the heart, and wit and humour became commodities in great request.'[3] But he writes as a rueful outsider in a hypocritical society. Broad humour is closed to him: 'were the humour of Smollett, which never fails to excite laughter in the closet, spoken upon the stage, it would frequently excite universal disgust'. 'Characters of broad humour are become peculiarly hazardous, because they are become far less frequent. A sense of propriety spreads in proportion as people read, and reading is an infallible consequence of riches'[4]. He personally believes that the real world is still eccentric and vital, 'there are a thousand living characters, a thousand incidents at which, if exhibited, an audience would revolt,merely on the score of improbability'[5].

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1. Thomas Holcroft, Duplicity as it is performed at the Theatre Royal (London, 1781), p.VII.
2. Ibid, p.IV.
3. Ibid, p.IV-V.
4. Ibid, p.V.
5. Ibid p.VI.

This sounds like a man ready to conform. He keeps his superiority and rough wisdom for his preface, senses the polite world on which he depends growing more urbane, then writes himself urbanely. The dialogue of 'Duplicity' is artificial and cerebral. Old Vandervelt complains that Clara is playing a wit and laughing at him. She responds:

> A wit!-Why a wit is a kind of urchin, that every man will set his dog at,but won't touch himself,for fear of pricking his fingers - A wit is a sort of monster,with a hideous long tongue, and no brains - A dealer in paradoxes - One that is blind, thro' a profusion of light - a wit is a spectre,that makes a pair of stilts of his criss-cross-row, walks upon metaphor, is always seen in a simile, vanishes if you come too near him,and is only to be laid by a cudgel.[1]

The characters reflect a determination to be outmodedly modish: the Restoration revived:

> Clara: 'Manners,like point ruffles, are now most fashionable when they are soiled'.
> Sir Harry: 'No no....they only hang the easier for being deprived of starch'[2]

His long poem in six cantos, The Sceptic (London, 1783) has a similar tone of bawdy disillusionment, linking believers in the Athanasian creed with those who

> Believe i th' navel string of Brama
> Eat holy dung of Dalay Lama
> Credit the tale of St Gelasius
> As much as Creed of Athanasius.[3]

These are early signs that he was to become a suspect, disregarded figure. The Sorrows of Werter, for all its paradoxical success, was proof that irreligion was the great untolerated sin for society of this period.

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1. Holcroft, Duplicity, p.25-26.
2. Ibid, p.6.
3. Holcroft, Human Happiness or The Sceptic (London, 1783). p.71.

England was intensely conformist and Protestant, at least in outward show. At the outset of his writing career Holcroft was hugely anxious to succeed with the public and yet tactlessly independent enough in mind to voice just the convictions which would most estrange it.

Quite how eager Holcroft was for conventional success can be seen in a review of Duplicity in the English Review:

> There has not been a comedy within the memory of man, in which the denouement has been so artfully concealed,and the suspense and anxiety of the audience concerning the fate of the principal character so thoroughly excited,as in Duplicity ... The play is a very powerful effect of genius.

adding, to satisfy the reader's curiosity about the nature of that genius:

> The writer is one of those who, self educated, rise by the efforts of persevering, industry,and superior faculties, from ignorance and obscurity into estimation.[1]

These are golden opinions; and they should be. Holcroft wrote them himself, anonymously.[2] Quite how unscrupulous he was is indicated by the fact that the Review mentions only seven plays for the entire season, and one of these, which was only on for one night and was an old play by this time, just happens to be Holcroft's.

To want success too much could inhibit the drive to innovate, and Holcroft's review outlines a very conventional success: a polite comedy with the dénouement 'artfully concealed', the audience 'thoroughly excited', a triumph of conformist theatre for a man approaching middle age and in a hurry for fame.

It was in some such state of mind that Holcroft went to France in 1783, to Paris. At that time Holcroft was already able to read French,

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1. The English Review, (January, 1783), p.76.
2. Elbridge Colby, Bibliography of Thomas Holcroft (New York, 1922), quotes this review (p.8) to indicate Holcroft's success, yet later, perhaps unwittingly, unmasks Holcroft's deceit. The article sixteen years later on Holcroft, Monthly Mirror, VIII (December, 1799), and approved by him has, at the end of a definitive list of his writings, the item, 'All the Criticisms and Remarks on the Drama in the early numbers of The English Review' So Holcroft wrote it.

though not, according to what he wrote in 1804 , able to speak it with much facility. In 1781 he had translated the four volumes of The Theatre of Education by the Countess de Genlis; it is possible that he was the translator in this year, 1783,of the three volumes of her Adelaide and Theodore; he certainly translated her five volume Tales of the Castle[1] in 1785. This was an amiable literary relationship, not one of Holcroft's pieces of piracy. There is a polite letter from the Countess to Holcroft which she sent him along with an advance copy of the second edition of her Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes[2].

The Countess was an ambivalent figure, not untypical of the Radical circles in which Holcroft now began to move. She was Governess to the children of Philippe (Égalité) Duke of Orleans and also the Duke's mistress. An expert on the moral education of young children, her three sets of books were very popular in England and in Europe generally. All three are orderly encyclopaedic collections of plays, stories and anecdotes, carefully arranged, some of them around a thread of narrative, to instil natural virtues and thoughtful awareness in young children. These three collections alone must have been a formidable task of translation but they are only three of at least forty books: plays, translations and novels, which Holcroft produced between 1780 and 1806, and one of these alone The Posthumous Works of Frederic II King of Prussia consisted of thirteen volumes.

This previous contact with French literature was acceptably conformist, the alternative title of Theatre of Education was Sacred Dramas, but his avowed aim in visiting Paris was even more so, it was:

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1. Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes (Paris, 1781). Adèle et Theodore (Paris, 1782). Veilles du Chateau (Paris, 1784). According to the Advertisement of The Theatre of Education it 'in less than a year from its publication has been translated into six foreign languages'.
2. Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft, 3 vols. (London, 1816), iii, p.319.

> to write elegant comedy; and he was sensible of the disadvantages under which he laboured in this respect, both from education, and the sphere of life in which he had hitherto chiefly moved. He wished to get a nearer and more intimate view of the manners of high life, that he might be able to describe its refinements or ridicule its absurdities, with more effect. He also wished, for the same reason, to acquaint himself, by actual observation, with foreign manners.[1]

This is not the posture of a literary innovator. Indeed Hazlitt's own editorial register in the passage quoted above, is evidence of the basic contented conformity of radical English intellectuals. Much can be forgiven to a successful oligarchy with some sense of style. Holcroft seems to have gone to Paris, still in social attitudes an adolescent at thirty eight, deliberately to worship at the shrine of the Ancien Regime. Paris awed and delighted him. Of the two fat volumes of his 1804 Travels from Hamburg, at least seven eighths are devoted to an excited account of the wonders of Paris; the Germans are dismissed in about twenty pages; even the Dutch get better treatment.

Hazlitt suggests sympathetically that dancing attendance on the great was, for Holcroft 'an office for which he was by nature but indifferently fitted'; he forgot that at least half 'the great' were women and by his marital record Holcroft was not indifferent to them. He had tried for the post of secretary to the British Ambassador which Henry Maty had occupied a few years before. When the Earl of Shelburne and the Duke of Manchester had both failed him he obtained a commission from the editor of the Morning Herald to write about events, fashions and public amusements at one and a half guineas a week, and the same from Rivington the publisher to scout out new works. This last commission was an interesting failure in a negative way, because German plays were available in French at this time but Holcroft

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1. Memoirs of the late Thomas Holcroft 3 vols (London, 1816), written by himself and continued from his diary, notes, and other papers by W. Hazlitt, ii,p31.

brought nothing back.

He arrived in Paris in April and lodged, perhaps with André Mercier, younger brother of Sebastien, author of The Year 2,500[1], perhaps with the Marquis Dampierre, for he knew them both, with, anyway, 'a worthy man-sadly addicted to the sin of poetry; now fancying himself a shepherd, now a farmer, and anon a gardener; delighting himself with rural images ... the whole mansion in as bare and desolate a state as one of Mrs Ratcliffe's midnight castles'[2]. Here he met Nicolas de Bonneville and, apparently, Dugald Stewart, who had not yet been given the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh. Holcroft's relationship with De Bonneville must have been much more than mere acquaintance. When the publisher Rivington's promised subsidies failed to arrive and Holcroft, who had brought his small son William with him, was in difficulties, De Bonneville loaned him sufficient money for them to survive. It was probably De Bonneville who looked after William when his father returned to London, leaving his son behind to learn French, because in a letter to De Bonneville a year later Holcroft wrote:

> Why will you not come? Billy has written to you, as you will see; you know he loves you, he has reason to do so; and though a child, I hope he will not forget his obligation.[3]

De Bonneville was only twenty three at this time. His is a name which often features in the English connection with German literature. That in itself is a sign of how dependent the English were on French scholarship and French order for their German texts. The French kingdom included a large number of German speakers, the Queen being one of them and, since much of the early literary activity centred on South Germany and Switzerland,

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1. Information from Revue de Littérature Comparée. 6th Year (1926), p.331.
2. Thomas Holcroft, Travels from Hamburg, 2 vols. (London, 1804), i, p.159.
3. Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft, ii, p.60-61.

not on northern marine Germany, France was the natural land bridge. Scotland's early lead in German studies is much more likely to have been the result of the 'auld alliance' than contacts with Hamburg and Bremen across the North Sea.

De Bonneville had some of that quality of eccentricity which seems so often to be associated with enthusiasts for the German. It is difficult to say why this should have been so. Perhaps it was because, apart from the mild and neo-Classical Gessner, almost all the German writers conveyed an intensity of feeling rather larger than life, and this quality of excess particularly attracted natures already predisposed in that direction. Certainly Canning was able to aim his blow at the German 'Mania' in the Anti-Jacobin precisely because German literature had become identified with moral and personal freakishness. Even Baron Riesbeck, a fellow countryman, attacked Goethe by commenting on his hair and dress in Travels through Germany. Holcroft himself fits easily into the pattern. He would stand stark naked for two hours a day in front of an open window taking an air bath, and he shared Godwin's faith that man could live for ever if only he could control his mind.

De Bonneville had been expelled from his school at Évreux for contradicting a teacher who had insisted that Rousseau forbade prayer; De Bonneville rushed out and returned reading the passage from Emile 'Faites vos prières courtes selon l'instruction de Jésus Christ'. In Paris he was protected by D'Alembert who was a Free Mason and later featured prominently in the Abbé Barruel's History of Jacobinism[1], an alarming and highly circumstantial account of how secret societies all over Europe were scheming to bring down the established order. De Bonneville studied languages,

1. Abbé Barruel, Memoirs illustrating the History of Jacobinism (London, 1797)

wrote poetry and co-operated with Le Brigant in a book designed to prove that all languages, including Chinese, derived from Celtic. Le Brigant himself was a Breton, but De Bonneville did not have that excuse.

He first worked with Adrien Chrétien Friedel in translating a German play Le Comte d'Ollbourg in 1781. Then in 1782 Friedel, Professeur en survivance des Pages de la grande Écurie du Roi, began to publish the twelve volumes of Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, a work which,with Junker and Liebault's shorter Théâtre Allemand,was almost the only gateway which the British had in the 1780s to German plays.

Friedel recruited De Bonneville's help, starting with Goethe's Clavigo, the second work in the first volume. From the second volume onwards (April 1782) De Bonneville wrote all the translations himself: 'j'ai traduit toutes les autres pieces sur le texte Allemand et toujours aidé d'un mot à mot, parola par parola, par le Professor Friedel.'[1]

1. Nicolas de Bonneville, Choix de Petits Romans Imités de l'Allemand (Paris, 1786), p.58.Notice.

NOUVEAU THÉÂTRE ALLEMAND - 1782-85

1782 VOL 1 Emilie Galotti (T) 1774, by Lessing: Clavigo (T) 1774, by Goethe.

1782 VOL 2 Jules de Tarente (T) 1776, by Leisewitz; Le Comte d'Olsbach (C) 1768, by Brandes; Menzikow (Drame) 1779, by Wezel.

1782 VOL 3 Atrée et Thyeste (T) 1766, by Weisse; Le Voila Pris (C) 1779, by Wezel; Stella (Drame) 1776, by Goethe.

1783 VOL 4 Agnès Bernau (T) 1780, no name but by Graf von Torring; Le Ministre d'état (Drame) 1771, by Gebber; L'Homme à la minute (C) 1767, by Hippel.

1783 VOL 5 Diégo et Léonor (T) 1775, by Unzer; La Nouvelle Emma (C) no date by Unzer.

1783 VOL 6 L'Hotel Garni (C) no date, by Brandes; Le Pere de Famille Allemand (Drame) 1781, by Gemmingen.

1783 VOL 7 Nathan le Sage (Drame) 1779, by Lessing; Philotes (T) no date, by Lessing.

1784 VOL 8 Elfride (T) 1773, by Bertuch; Walwais et Adélaïde (Drame) 1779, by Dalberg; Le Créancier(C) 1777, by Richter.

1784 VOL 9 Goetz von Berliching (sic) (Drame Historique) 1773, by Goethe; La Mort d'Adam (T) 1767, by Klopstock.

1784 VOL 10 Miss Sara Sampson (T) 1755, by Lessing; L'Attelage de Poste (C) 1769, by D'Ayrenhoff.

1785 VOL 11 Otto de Wittelsbach (T) 1781, by Steinberg; Par Plus de Six Plats (tableau) 1780, by Grossman.

1785 VOL 12 Les Voleurs (T) no date, by Schiller; Le Bon Fils (C) 1770, by Engel.

and for convenient comparison, Junker and Liebault's four volumes

THÉÂTRE ALLEMAND as completed in 1785

1771 VOL 1 Miss Sara Sampson (Tragédie Bourgeoise) by Lessing; Les Juifs (C) by Lessing; La Fidélité (Pastoral) by Gaertner.

1771 VOL 2 L'Esprit Fort (C) by Lessing; Le Billet de Loterie (C) by Gellert; Le Trésor (C) by Lessing.

1785 VOL 3 L'Esprit Fort (T) by Lessing; Minna de Barnhelm (C) by Lessing, Le Misogyne (C) by Lessing.

1785 VOL 4 Thamos Roi d'Egypte (Drame Héroique) by Gebler; Romeo et Julie (Tragédie Bourgeoise) by Weiss Codrus (T) by Cronegk.

Friedel was much younger, born 1753, than Junker, born 1716, and this is clearly reflected in the scope and contemporaneity of the twelve volumes. Junker had been working since 1762 as a German language instructor at the École Militaire in Paris. His first two volumes caused little critical stir and incline heavily to comedy and Lessing. It was only with the success of the Friedel selection that Junker set to work again with a modishly more bitter version of L'Esprit Fort and notably weightier works in his fourth and final volume. Were it not for his extensive introduction the collection would be of slight importance. But in fact it was Junker's introduction which was so often noted and quoted in English journals of the eighties.[1]

The Friedel and De Bonneville collection is infinitely more exact in its scholarship. Each play has an introductory history of its stage performances and often a criticism of its aims and success. Lessing appears in it as a much weightier figure; classical and biblical drama have a place, light comedy is fairly represented and, most significantly, wild historical tragedies feature prominently, with Diégo et Lénor, Elfride, Goetz von Berliching and Les Voleurs. There is a tendency for these last to be concentrated in the later volumes; Les Voleurs only coming out in 1785, just three years before the Mackenzie Address.

De Bonneville's name is not linked with Friedel's on the title page until the seventh volume. The twelve volumes cost forty eight livres free of postage and they could be bought at, among six other Paris addresses, the Cabinet de Littérature Allemande, rue Saint-Honoré. This name in itself indicates the level of French interest in German writing; there was no such equivalent among the London book shops.

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1. Maty, New Review, The European Magazine, The Edinburgh Review, Gentleman's Magazine.

A study of the volumes will suggest that while Holcroft was in Paris, from April to October 1783, De Bonneville was probably working on Unzer's Diego et Leonor, which Holcroft himself later used for his only real attempt at a Sturm und Drang play.

At this point a list of Holcroft's own 'German' translations will be useful. There are thirteen items and seven of them are plays derived, to some extent or other, from Friedel and De Bonneville's volumes (N.T.A.). On examination the list is much less impressive than it looks:-

1788 The Life of Baron Frederic Trenck

1789 Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy

1789 Posthumous Works of Frederic II King of Prussia, 13 volumes

1789 The Secret History of the Court of Berlin (strictly considered, a French work).

1790 The German Hotel, from J.C. Brandes Der Gasthof, (N.T.A. Vol. 6)

1794 Love's Frailties, from Von Gemmingen's Der Deutsche Hausvater (N.T.A. Vol. 6)

1796 Count Frederic Leopold Stolberg's Travels through Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Sicily.

1798 He's much to blame, owing something to Goethe's Clavigo (N.T.A. Vol. 1).

1798 The Inquisitor, from J.C. Unzer's Diego und Lenore, (N.T.A. Vol. 5)

1801 J.W. von Goethe's Herman and Dorothea

1805 In the 2 volumes of The Theatrical Recorder:-

The Affectionate Son, from J.J. Engel's Le Bon Fils, (N.T.A. Vol. 12).

Emilia Galotti, from Lessing's play (N.T.A. Vol. 1, Emilie Galotti).

Nathan the Wise, from Lessing's play (N.T.A. Vol. 7 Nathan le Sage).

Apart from the opportunity to read, with De Bonneville, extracts from

Macbeth to the Duke and Duchess of Chartres, it is not apparent what advantages Holcroft gained from his six months in Paris. Certainly he left financially the poorer. The dates above suggest that he only recalled De Bonneville's twelve volumes seven years later.

As a remote and almost frivolous suggestion it is just possible that his highly successful musical historical play The Noble Peasant, 1784, owes something to Schiller's Die Räuber. Les Voleurs, De Bonneville's French translation of Schiller, did not come out until the twelfth volume of Nouveau Théâtre in 1785, but the original play was performed in Mannheim in 1781 and soon became well known. There are superficial resemblances between the two plays. Leonard, the hero of The Noble Peasant, is the leader of a band of outlaws fighting against a wicked lord for the hand of the lovely Edwitha; but at least two plays on the Robin Hood story appeared in England in this century and these are a more likely source for Holcroft. It would have been dramatically very satisfying if the English response to Die Räuber, a mere three years after its appearance in Germany, had been this rollicking comic opera with its songs:

> Come my good fellows, and quit the bower,
> The sun no longer seems to lour;
> Your arrows bring, your bows of yew,
> With silver tips and silken clue;
> And let the lusty bugle horn
> Tell of the death of deer forlorn:
> With fatal note resounding,
> What tho' he be swift and bounding,
> The horn, the horn, the lusty horn
> Shall tell the death of deer forlorn.

Holcroft's claim in the Advertisement that, 'Ambitious of deriving fame from a source whence fame has so often flowed, from Poetry, the Author has paid an attention to the Songs which he hopes Lovers of Poetry will approve'[1], is revealing both of his limited writing skills and the indomitable

1. Holcroft, The Noble Peasant (London, 1784), Advertisement, p.i.

naivety of a self taught man. A comic opera treatment would have been all that the Lord Chamberlain's Licenser would have permitted, but The Noble Peasant was very successful. However inferior the writing, Holcroft had a just appreciation of his English audiences at this time. Cheerful superficiality and 'tragedies' with a happy ending were the rule in London theatres.

Holcroft's next contact with De Bonneville was in the following year when the two men mounted a nine day raid on Beaumarchais' The Marriage of Figaro. They attended the play each night, memorising as much of the plot and dialogue as they were able. Then Holcroft hurried back to London to stage his version of Figaro - Follies of a Day at Covent Garden, 14 December 1784[1]. It was very successful but again it indicates Holcroft's indifference to De Bonneville's German work.

Holcroft did eventually use seven of the plays in the Friedel and de Bonneville collection, but so unintelligently that the history of them is one of melancholy lost opportunity. Emilia Galotti and Nathan the Wise came out in compressed form in a rag bag theatrical periodical called The Theatrical Recorder as late as 1802, with Engel's one act The Affectionate Son. Goethe's Clavigo he crossed with Le Complaisant by Le Ferriol Pont de Veyle to produce He's much to blame, a slight comedy in 1798. Earlier, and anonymously, in 1790 Holcroft translated Brandes' Der Gasthof as The German Hotel, a safe, neatly turned comedy with stock characters. The only play of the Nouveau Théâtre which Holcroft used and which could be classed as Sturm und Drang was J.C. Unzer's five act tragedy Diego und Leonore. This was not brought out in London until 1798. The original play was written in 1775 so Holcroft was attempting no daring introduction. It was moreover, a complete flop when it appeared, now titled The Inquisitor.

1. Holcroft paid De Bonneville 480 Livres and kept 11,540 livres himself from the profits.

Feeble as is this play in its English form, Holcroft's treatment of it is a clear pointer to why the English gained little from the Sturm und Drang.

No one reading the so called Tragedies of the English 18th century theatre can fail to notice how averse English writers were to unhappy endings. Plays like The Carmelite[1] or The Countess of Salisbury[2] feel that they have paid their dues to tragedy if the heroine has been threatened for a few minutes in a dark dungeon. After this she may be reunited with her husband and have her son restored to her. English audiences, perhaps by mere habit, perhaps as a reflection of a reasonable and optimistic society, disliked a gloomy conclusion. Quite possibly there is a subdued religious force at work. Can a benevolent and reasonable Deity, constructor of Newton's clockwork machine, permit the virtuous to die miserably? English novels have the same bias, with notable lacrymose exceptions, like Clarissa. Certainly it is safe to generalise that the average English theatre goer expected optimism from his dramatist and the dramatists enjoyed money more than harsh human truths.

In Diego und Leonore Holcroft found a bitter and tortuous plot. A German Protestant loves a Catholic girl. The wicked Inquisitor, Don Timothee intends the girl for his brother. The German boy , unknown to himself, is the illegitimate son of the Cardinal Patriarch of Portugal, a benevolent but weak figure. The wicked Inquisitor has kept a girl for six years in the Santa Casa's dungeons to satisfy his lusts. The German protestant lad is thrown into a catholic dungeon. After an intensely straining and stressing love scene the two lovers swallow poison, embracing death as

1. R. Cumberland, The Carmelite (London, 1784). First performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.
2. Hall Hartson, The Countess of Salisbury (London, 1767). First performed at the Theatre Royal in The Haymarket.

proof of their devotion. By a resolution of bracelets, portraits and letters the Cardinal Patriarch realises too late that he has lost his son. The wicked Inquisitor is sent to prison.

The first and most obvious remark to be passed upon Holcroft is that in 1783, with this plot to work on, he could have anticipated Lewis's The Monk by twelve years. Dungeons, evil lusts, monstrous relgious hypocrisy. statues and candles, all the elements were there.

What Holcroft did do, three years after Lewis's novel had pointed the way for him, is pitiful. For the first three quarters of the play the plot is much the same. The two fated lovers pledge their tryst with death in lurid language:

> Leonore — They have wheels,and straining cords, and mean to try thy strength. A little cordial, though but a drop, will recruit thy powers,and bid them rally. Dost thou understand me? ... about midnight,Alberto, I will regard the rising moon, and drink to the health of my beloved.[1]

The wicked Inquisitor has a certain panache: 'Lo you, how they fly the very rustling of my robe'[2], and thunders villainously, not unlike The Monk or the wicked Father of Monvel's Victimes Cloîtrés[3]: 'I'll reach the summit yet; and,there fixed, brave the storms, the thunders, and the wreck of elements.'[4] Then comes anti-climax. Just as the lovers are about to drink poison they hear a mysterious voice. It is the Cardinal coming to the rescue. The play collapses.

The dramatic strength of the Sturm und Drang model is that it stretches out characters upon the rack of disaster and so examines human nature nobly. By his lame conclusion Holcroft cuts Leonore's magnificent speech to the statue of the Virgin down to a quarter and wholly loses Diego's

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1. Holcroft, The Inquisitor (London, 1798), p.52.
2. Ibid, p.55.
3. Boutet de Monvel's play was first performed in Paris 29 March 1791.
4. The Inquisitor, p.67.

ending which made the whole love theme logical: 'Ecoute-moi. Je t'aime jusqu'à la mort, (Il saisit la coupe) dans la mort, (il boit le poison) & après la mort . ('est l'éternité qui rassemblera nos cendres aimantes & sensibles'.[1] If you are to have melodrama then you must have the taste for death. The 19th century with its devotion to deathbeds in plays and novels was the truer flowering time in England of the German spirit.

Holcroft had risen through obstinate determination, that obstinacy became his limitation, he never seemed able to analyse where he had gone wrong. He was so devoted to The Inquisitor, when he had finally mutilated Unzer's work, that he insisted on publishing it. Everything was amiss except his writing:

> My opinion is,that it was not the play which occasioned the laughter, but the manner of performing it, aided by the gratifications which the flippancy of criticism finds in flattering its own discrimination and superiority ... Our theatres at present,(and from its smallness this theatre in particular) are half filled with prostitutes and their paramours: they disturb the rest of the audience; and the author and common sense,are the sport of their caprice and profligacy.[2]

later he admits:

> ... though the Inquisitor was certainly no more than a trifling effort, I still do not think it is a contemptible one.[3]

In fairness to Holcroft, his bawdy house audience must have begun to laugh long before they detected his lamentable ending. Perhaps the social cross-section of a London audience was very different to that of a protestant provincial German town and hence rejected the taste of the latter. Thus London prostitutes with a raucous sense of the ridiculous could have played some part in preventing the early impact of Sturm und

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1. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand Vol. V, (Paris, 1783), p.174.
2. Memoirs of the late Thomas Holcroft (London, 1816), ii, 245.
3. Ibid, ii, 280.

Drang emotionalism upon English home brewed drama. Certainly no such fine sense of the ridiculous impeded the onrush of Gothic novels, which could be enjoyed in private, safe from infectious audience reaction.

In the same month that Holcroft was brooding over The Inquisitor, June 1798, his reactions to Stoddart's translation of Schiller's Don Carlos reveal appreciation but an almost total lack of useful critical vocabulary and analytical sense:

> The fourth and fifth acts are greatly confused. The first interview of Philip II and the Marquis of Posa, is a masterly scene. The whole is unequal; and in some parts, feeble; in others, tedious: and yet a performance of which none but a man of genius could be capable. It reminds the reader of Hamlet and parts of Othello.[1]

The English of the later 18th century were usually content to relate all tragedy to Shakespeare. Holcroft does not examine excellence closely. But he had very little guidance from the two, often reproduced and summarised, Introductions to German drama in the two French collections.

Both Junker and Friedel are agreed upon the pretentiousness and irrelevance of Gottsched. Friedel, the younger critic, is more forthright:

> Gottsched -'homme de beaucoup d'érudition, mais sans génie, vain et pédant.' Cato -'tragédie pitoyable, écrite en mauvais vers; ce n'est qu'un assemblage bisarre de scènes angloises et françoises.'[2]

Junker deflates him more delicately:

> Mais pour avoir paru dans l'instant de la révolution, pour y avoir applaudi, pour l'avoir encouragée, ce n'est certainement pas avoir le mérite de l'avoir méditée et consommée.[3]

Instead of a direct attack he quotes the author of Lettres sur la littérature moderne 1759-63.

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1. Memoirs of the late Thomas Holcroft (London, 1816) ii, 269.
2. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1, p.9-11.
3. Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1, p.64.

> .... sa prétendue réforme ne s'exerce que sur des bagatelles qui ne méritent pas l'attention d'un bon esprit, ou attaque des choses qu'un bon esprit regrette.[1]

So readers of an English translation of these, in The European Magazine or the Edinburgh Review[2], are left in no doubt that Gottsched is a spent, unfashionable force; but it is never exactly clear that his plays are slight because their presentation of human manners is superficial. Both introductions treat vaguely of a German preference for profundity: 'le terrible et le melancholique agissent plus sûrement sur nous que le tendre et le passioné.'[3] Germans wished to know the good and the evil depths of their heroes. 'Pour cet effet il demande à lire dans son coeur'[4].

Then, rather bewilderingly for an English reader, Junker undercut all his praise by stating that even the best German plays bore no comparison to good French plays, and could never be put on in a French theatre without considerable alterations. If they were not good enough for the French the English were unlikely to scramble for French leavings. Friedel similarly followed his praise of Goetz with the often quoted warning that Goetz had seduced a large number of mediocrities to follow in his tracks 'regardant les regles comme un joug que l'on pouvoit secouer impunément, et persuadés peut-être qu'un assemblage de scenes extravagantes, sans liaisons et sans suite, suffisoit pour paroître original'.[5]

This is Riesbeck's 'horde of Calmucks who some years since made an inroad on the German Parnassus and laid it waste.'[6]

All of which make a weak recommendation. Then, to ease English readers,

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1. Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1 p.68.
2. Edinburgh Review, IV (1786), p.92.
3. Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1, (1772), 70.
4. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1. (1782), 54.
5. Ibid, p.37
6. Riesbeck, Travels through Germany, 3 vols (1787), ii, 213.

including Mackenzie, into a smug critical sleep, both writers go on to suggest that there is a wild, brilliant English style of drama and an orderly unity-observing French style, and that the Germans draw flatteringly from both and end up somewhere in between. Plays which exemplify this are never instanced.

In fact, of course,neither English nor French drama in that decade was producing anything to compare with the Germans in originality or influence. Junker and Friedel are both following Wiesse's view in the Beitrag zum Deutschen Theater (1759-68) that German should take the middle way between French and English, learning from the French the art of composition and from the English the great tragic effects. So when Junker writes of 'la force et ... la hardiesse des Anglais'[1] and Friedel says that German plays follow English models 'par la touche mâle et hardie avec laquelle les caracteres sont dessinés et par l'expression énergique des passions'[2], both men are speaking historically,but not making this clear. The English reader gets no impression that here is a new model of direct language or that some of these plays tackle the human predicament so boldly that they could shake society. Even so, granting that he had virtually no worth-while critical guidance, it is inexplicable that Holcroft,the old Radical,could not have given a warmer appreciation of Don Carlos. Given his detachment and his scornful view of society it is the play he should have worked on himself in 1790 instead of the trivial German Hotel.

If Holcroft is unsatisfactory, at least he was various. In 1788 and 1799 he worked on four translations, all have a German air about them, all were, in fact, translated from the French and, in one case, actually

1. Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1, p.76.
2. Nouveau Théâtre Allemand, Vol. 1 (1782), 53.

written by a Frenchman. They are a curious foursome. None of them is 'German Gothic' in the way that Horrid Mysteries 17 and many translations in the 1790s could be so described, yet taken together they almost seem designed to prepare an English reader for the secret societies, corruption and hidden rituals that were soon to become associated with Germany. If a shallow writer, Holcroft was probably a sensitive one. The death of the great Frederick and the sinister rumours which began to gather around his successor Frederick William must have begun, by 1788, to draw the prurient curiosity of the English and make them link Germany with dark, ludicrous, but always interesting deeds. Holcroft was not made by nature to be a Goth; The Inquisitor proves that, but he was made to make money and it seems that, in these years just before the 1790s, there was money to be made from books on Germany. To some extent these four non-fiction books of Holcroft's were a preparation for the wilder fictions that were soon to come, but in which Holcroft showed no interest.

The first, The Life of Baron Frederic Trenck could have been taken from either of two French versions of the original, one by Le Tourneur, one by Baron de Bock, both published in the same year, 1788, as Holcroft's translation, so he wasted no time, clearly thinking the work likely to interest the British. The Baron's Life has a long, distinctly Gothic, account of his incarceration for years in a damp dungeon with barbaric shackles of iron around his neck and arms. All was the result of a mysterious grudge held against him by Frederick the Great.

Lavater's famous Essays on Physiognomy launched a popular pseudo-science of the links between faces and character. Holcroft worked from Madame de la Fite's translation. By an interesting co incidence Lavater himself featured in the second of Holcroft's translations of that year 1789: as one of the secret society of the Illuminati working to control the sexually dissolute new King of Prussia with devices such as an Italian

aphrodisiac called Diavolini.

This second book was The Secret History of the Court of Berlin. Though anonymous it was quickly recognised by reviewers as the work of Count Mirabeau. The Abbé Barruel in his History of the Jacobins regarded the book as particularly insidious and the beginning of the collapse of orderly Europe. Presumably this was because it described a King as a contemptible lecher with no will of his own.

The book, as Holcroft rendered it, was as unsensational and decent as he could contrive it, and this despite its lurid subject matter. Why he should have resorted to five rows of asterisks several times rather than print the damaging and journalistically interesting material of his original is a mystery. In his Translator's Preface he makes no secret of his hostility to the established order of Europe:

> It is time that the jargon of ignorance and the cant of tyranny should cease ... All should be illumination! No obscure corner, in which vice may lurk. No unswept sinuosity, the offence of which is perpetuated because all are forbidden to rake it away. The Prince on his throne, like his statue on its pedestal, is placed there to be inspected ... Where, who, is the individual whose pleasure and whose peace should be prefered to the welfare of millions?[1]

The whole tone of the book is pro-French and anti-British. The Duke of York is described as 'a puissant hunter, a potent drinker, and indefatigable laugh er[sic] destitute of breeding and society'[2]. The Prussian monarch himself 'seems to have every sympton of the most incurable weakness, the most corrupt among the persons by whom he is surrounded, of whom the gloomy and visionary Bishopswerder may be ranked as first, daily increase in power.'[3]

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1. The Secret History of the Court of Berlin, 2 Vols. (London, 1789), i, VIII. Trans. by T. Holcroft.
2. Ibid, i, 281.
3. Ibid, i, 25.

The second volume plunges deeper into mystical plottings. The King is told that Mirabeau is allied with Biester and Nicolai 'who have written much against the mystics ... The intention was to lead the King to suppose was an anti-mystic'[1], the King himself being pro-mystic 'studied, watched and surrounded by the English; who will goad inflame and intoxicate him, that he may disturb the peace of the continent'[2]. The arch Gothic villain of Mirabeau's stranger than fiction account is Prince Frederic of Brunswick, 'at present a mystic, when the Monarch is supposed a devotee; a pensioner of the free mason lodges, from whom he annually receives six thousand crowns'[3]. He has 'lived in Paris and plunged into all the follies of Mesmerism. He afterwards professed to be a somnambulist, and next continued the forces by the practice of midwifery', all 'to give credit to the sect of the mystics of whom he is one of the most enthusiastic chiefs'[4].

This begins to suggest the prattle of Face and Subtle in Jonson's Alchemist and Holcroft is clearly moving out of his depths. When Mirabeau promises an anecdote 'which is infinitely important, at least for my security while I remain here, to keep secret ... which will shew you whither tends this imaginary theory of the mystics, connected with the Rosicrucian free-masons'[5], Holcroft only supplies five rows of asterisks. A little later another ominous passage begins, 'Every corrupt sympton is manifest. Rietz, a rascal, avaricious, chief pimp and an avowed Giton (catemite) insomuch that...'[6], but the narrative breaks off into another five rows of asterisks.

The book concludes appropriately with the Emperor's bon mot on Frederic William: 'let there be bawdy houses on the wings and I will easily beat him in the centre'.

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1. The Secret History of the Court of Berlin (London, 1789), ii, 102.
2. Ibid, i, XVIII.
3. Ibid, ii, 152.
4. Ibid, ii, 200.
5. Ibid, ii, 123.
6. Ibid, ii, 126.

The most Gothic secrets of the book and of the Prussian court were not revealed by Holcroft but by his friend Fuseli in a review of the translation in the Analytical Review.[1] This is more appropriately considered in the next chapter on Fuseli, but the Analytical Review was Joseph Johnson, the publisher's paper, Johnson was a Radical and this further revelation indicates how anxious the British Radicals were to discredit a monarchical regime. It is not within the scope of this study to consider whether there really was in Europe, as the Abbé Barruel suggests, a Jacobinical plot to topple all the thrones of Europe by a wide net of seditious publishing spreading out from the German Illuminati. What is, however, apparent at this time is the way that Germany was becoming connected in the British reader's mind with spiritualism, mesmeric quackery and secret societies long before Barruel's 1797 alarum bells rang, and this awareness immediately preceded the decade of the German Gothic novels, whose only real originality of theme was just this use of secret societies.

Whether Holcroft thought, when he translated The Secret History, that he was doing anything of wider significance than merely making money is debateable. De Bonneville had been a friend and associate of Holcroft and he had been fascinated by Free Masonry and its connection with the Jesuits. He published La Maçonnerie Écossoise, a sub volume of the larger Les Jésuites chassés de la Maçonnerie et leur poignard brisé par Les Maçons.[2] He was a Girondist in the Revolution, lay low during The Terror, which significantly spared him, was a friend of Tom Paine, translating his Maritime Compact, and eventually fled to America. Fuseli was a friend of Holcroft and also a very close friend of Lavater, who seems to have been involved in the secret societies. Holcroft himself later spent several happy years

1. The Analytical Review, IV (May, 1789) p.80.
2. (Paris, 1788).

in Paris with his French wife while England and France were at war. His position is curious, but it is hard to take seriously a man who was so anxious for political martyrdom that he published a book saying what he would have replied if he had been accused of treason.[1] Mary Wollstonecraft, who would have been Fuseli's lover if he had not just married a highly possessive model from Somerset, was another member of this faintly risible circle. But if she was part of the conspiratorial web of publishing her choice of Salzmann's Moralisches Elementarbuch[2], improving stories for children, is again unimpressive as a propaganda weapon. Certainly the vague general will for a radical shift in society and government was present in this group, but the fact that an account of plotting in Germany should be seen as aiding this shift in England demonstrates how poor were their tactics. Awareness of Gothick Germany could only confirm the British bourgeoisie, exemplified by Jane Austen, in their good fortune at being separated by twenty eight miles of water from all that nonsense.

In 1783 Holcroft had been close to Sturm und Drang drama but missed his opportunity. In 1789 he was near to a new line in the Gothic novel and again failed to move fashionably. After his failed martyrdom in 1795 he seems to have begun another mental change of direction, possibly the most interesting in his butterfly career, this time towards the neo-Classical, a movement far more happily in accord with his austere outlook than the superstitious trappings of Gothicity. Now in 1796 he produced the first of all his translations which really was from the German.

The book was called Travels through Germany Switzerland, Italy and Sicily[3] by Goethe's friend, Frederic Leopold, Count Stolberg, a faithful,

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1. T. Holcroft, A Narrative of the facts to a prosecution for High Treason and the defence the author had prepared if he had been brought to trial (London, 1795).
2. Elements of Morality, 3 vols (London, 1791), pub. J.Johnson, illus. William Blake.
3. F.L. Count Stolberg, Travels through Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Sicily, 2 Vols. (London, 1796) Translated by T. Holcroft.

if uninspired mirror image of Goethe's great Italian journey of 1786. With its echoes of Gessner, its eye for rural idyls and its accounts of the temples of Magna Graecia it is a Hellenised piece of writing.

The translation is splendidly produced, two volumes illustrated by prints from Piranesi to show the classical buildings of Rome, and then, by inferior illustrations, the Magna Graecia buildings of Naples and Sicily. With its meticulous attention to agriculture, snobbery and fine art the book's vocabulary taxed Holcroft hard. As translator he spoke of

> .... a work that has obliged him to exert a minute degree of attention, a suspicious unremitting watchfulness, and labour accompanied by anxiety greater than it is his intention ever again to encounter, in a work where neither the thoughts, the manner, nor the materials, are his own.[1]

The book is at its most interesting in Switzerland because there the tide of translations from the German turns back to its origin again with Gessner and pastoral simplicity. This might be expected from an ardent enthusiast for the Greek ideal like Stolberg but it is surprising to find Holcroft adding his name to the long line of English writers who try their hand at the marble elegance of Gessner's Idyls. The account is dated Zurich, 5 September 1791, just after the Count had met the ubiquitous Lavater and delivered himself of a breathless transcendental rapture to the great Being of the Rhine falls.

> During my stay here, the monument, which the friends and admirers of Solomon Gessner, the poet, associated to erect to his memory, arrived from Rome. It is the work of Trippel, the famous sculptor of Schaffhausen; and is an excellent performance .... It consists of a white marble slab, about five feet high and four broad: where the two shepherds of Gessner, Daphnis and Micon, are cut in alto relievo; at the instant when Micon makes a libation to the memory of the father of his friend. Perhaps you do not recall this beautiful idyl ...[2]

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1. F.L. Count Stolberg Travels through Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Sicily, 2 Vols. (London, 1796), i, XII. Translated by T. Holcroft.
2. F.L. Stolberg, Travels (London 1796), i, 69.

there follows a complete translation of the idyl. While in this mood Stolberg acts out his own idyl, visiting an old farmer on the Utliberg where he had spent a happy holiday with Goethe, years before.[1] The old Swiss leaps with joy to see the Count and presses him to his breast. 'Had I been a Greek, I should have made libations of mild country wine and Switzerland milk to the Naiades, the Dryads and the Oreades'[2].

To complete the chain of associations of Greek simplicity with pure education and the Northern Homer, Stolberg visits Pestalozzi at his orphan's school, then evokes Nature:

> .... on the shores of the lake the white clouds were rarefied; and, being illumined by the morning sun,they reminded me of the mists of Ossian; which that great songster of nature compares to the floating locks of his beautiful Comala.[3]

Remembering that the date is 1796 and that Coleridge and Wordsworth, with Dorothy, are moving towards their Gessner Idyl in Somerset, it is not fanciful to detect, through Holcroft's linking, an unusual European intersensivity of mood at this point. England and Germany drift first towards Gothic, then back towards Hellenic simplicity, then forward again in a fusion of the two themes. France, though separated by war, is moving in much the same directions with the tomb dramas of Monvel around 1790 and then the Greek style of André Chenier, 1791.

Quite how conscious Holcroft was of all this is uncertain. But at his age to cultivate fluent German was a very conscious effort and his next, and last,translation from German was Goethe's Herman and Dorothea, an uncannily prescient choice. Holcroft was regularly practising his German

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1. Holcroft had been pressed into contact with Gessner much earlier. In his translation of De Genlis, Tales of the Castle, 5 Vols. (Dublin, 1765), i, 124, a story Eglantine or Indolence Reformed tells how a spoilt girl recovers her virtuous sensibility by an attack of smallpox and a fortnight's stay with Gessner.
2. Stolberg, Travels, i, 72.
3. Ibid, i, 77.

in London in 1798 with Dr. Geisweiller. In 1799 he left England for Germany but within months was settled in Paris. Herman and Dorothea was published in London in 1801 while Holcroft was still in Paris. An estimate of the actual year when he wrote it would be helpful.

Wordsworth inquired of Coleridge about 'the merit of Goethe's new poem' in a letter dated 14 or 21 December 1798. The original poem was published in Brunswick in October 1797. Wordsworth in his letter and Holcroft in his translator's Preface are both intrigued with the difficulties of translating the last two feet of hexameters. 'Michael' and 'The Brothers' were published in 1800, The Excursion in 1814. Parts of The Prelude were being written in 1799. Holcroft had chosen to turn into English a poem which attempted exactly that modest simplicity of diction and depth of common significance which was interesting Wordsworth, and at a time roughly in the middle of Wordsworth's attempt to create a blank verse which would not automatically recall Milton & Shakespeare. Too much must not be pressed, but these four poems of Wordsworth seem closer in style to Holcroft's Goethe than to Cowper's or Crabbe's attempts at rustic simplicity.

Holcroft's claim to have written the poem for love rather than for money was probably true. He was 'receiving pleasure from a more intimate study of the German language' and 'so great was the pleasure it gave, that it might truly be said to flow from the pen CON AMORE'[1]. He was hardly likely to have translated a German poem while he was enjoying himself in his beloved Paris. In any case, if his Travels from Hamburg, 1804, are any guide, by this time he had wearied of German. 'I can never forget the harsh effect produced on my ear, by a German poet, who recited some passages from a German tragedy; purposely that I might admire the powerful sounds of the language, of which I was then ignorant.....their singing

1. Goethe, Herman and Dorothea (London, 1801), p.iii, iv. Translated by T. Holcroft.

and their serious recitation never can be agreeable to my ear'.[1] So he probably translated Herman in England in 1798 and 1799, just after Wordsworth had written the Lyrical Ballads, and then went, very much in Wordsworth's footsteps, to Bremen and Hamburg. It is another example of Holcroft's facility for acting 'typically'.

Holcroft's gift for the right work at the seminal moment was not matched by his skill with metre. But he did make a valiant effort to understand the pitfalls of blank verse monotony and he had made a serious study of Goethe's verse form. In his Preface he wrote;

> The original is written in hexameter verses; to which German readers are now familiarized, by their best Poets. This verse is favourable to flowing description, and ful ness of epithet. In these, Goethe is rich, almost to profusion: nor to blank verse incapable of them; but, from its abundance of monosyllables, the English language is characteristically laconic ... were the lines to express additional thoughts deducted, and a syllabic estimate made, the English would be at least one fourth shorter than the German.[2]

He intended consciously to introduce irregularities: 'Line 45 of Calliope is composed of anapaests; and has only four accents instead of five. This is contrary to rule, the man of taste and wholesome criticism will determine whether it be contrary to melody and feeling.'[3] The line reads:

> Each with a heated face and dusty shoes,
>
> Painting and wiping the drops from the brow

and he seems not to have noticed the prominence of the dactyls. Certainly some of the rhythms are clumsy in the poem's main flow. But he had intelligently considered the real strength of the poem and quoted one of the Schlegel brothers's appraisals from the Jena Allgemeine Litteratur Zeitung: 'All is simple, all is gradual, all is direct ... the mind is always kept alive,

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1. T. Holcroft, Travels from Hamburg (London, 1804), i, p.81.
2. Goethe, Herman and Dorothea (London, 1801), p.XV.
3. Ibid. p. xvii.

it is never so hurried away as to lose the power of reflection'.[1] With a little charity the same could be said of Holcroft's translation, for all the occasional metrical gaucheries. It is a sustained effort and likely to suggest an enlargement of the scope of English poetry to anyone reading it. Goethe had endured European wars as Wordsworth had not, and Goethe seems to have had a capability for outgoing love which the egotistical Wordsworth subdued after Vaudracourt and Julia; with these reservations the two poets are attempting the same function of poetry.

To give the flavour of Holcroft's achievement long extracts are needed. In the first Herman is explaining to his father how he was snubbed in love:

> My heart indulg'd a hope to please the youngest.
> Last Easter day, not soon to be forgot,
> My frock-coat new, my hair trim to the mode,
> I enter'd; giggling soon began; I hoped
> 'Twas not at me. And down she sat to play
> And sing, her father there, of PAMINA
> And TAMINO: I know not who or what.
> Asham'd of being mute, I asked where liv'd
> This loving pair; and when, and what their fate?
> A roar of laughter was the sole reply.
> 'It seems, young friend, you read no story but
> Of Eve and Adam!' said the Sire. And then
> Once more the laugh burst loud, from girls, and boys;
> The trader holding both his sides. Confus'd,
> And vex'd, my hat fell from my hand; again
> Unmanner'd peals began: nor ended song
> Or sonate that the titter broke not forth;
> Or rather never ceas'd. Speechless I left
> The house; and, drooping, hung my coat upon
> The peg, where still it hangs, and tuck'd my hair
> Beneath my hat: but never more to cross
> That threshold, with a lover's trembling hopes.
> For love can never come, where pertness, pride,
> And high-bred airs are mimick'd; while the mind
> In petty malice, and in petty arts delights.[2]

When poetry tries to include ordinary experience and to express it in unpretentious language it has to include words like 'giggling' and

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1. Herman and Dorothea, (1801), p.VII .
2. Ibid, p.35-36.

'titter'. The poetry of English romanticism often took the easier way of ornate contrivance and rhetoric. Wordsworth published his Prelude too late and in its elaborated final form. He had rather less confidence than Holcroft. It is quite possible that he had read Holcroft's version of Goethe but, though one passage is curiously suggestive of Michael's 'clipping tree', the dates make it impossible that he could have used it:

> Upon the hill, which bounds these family
> Domains, a pear tree stood; seen far and near;
> Fam'd for its fruit; by what hand planted, no
> Man knew. Beneath its shade were wont to come
> The cow-herd, and the labourer; and sit
> Upon the mossy stone, and rest, and take
> Their noon-tide meal: a momentary joy
> She hoped to find her Herman there: nor hoped
> In vain. With folded arms he sat, and gaz'd
> Toward the high and mountainous horizon.[1]

This poetry, experimental, possibly influential, certainly of-its-moment, was Holcroft's last translation from the German apart from his tired collection of De Bonneville bits and pieces, strung together with old actor's anecdotes in the monthly parts of The Theatrical Recorder in 1805.

Holcroft has been considered in some detail in this chapter to discover if any helpful conclusions can be drawn to explain the course of Anglo-German literary interaction in the last years of the century.

His primary importance for this study is as an instance of the restraining weight of established English taste upon a man of strong and even eccentric personality. His most limiting quality may have been his admiration for the society within which he so often failed to make his mark. He could see in abstract the faults of that society but not how literature of the theatre could be turned to correct those faults.

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1. Herman and Dorothea, (1801), p.59.

It was in his potential to have done far more than Mackenzie, a clear four years before the 1788 Address. If there were to have been a revolutionary change in the themes and manners of the English stage then surely Holcroft with his outsider's maturity, his sturdy radical non-conformity and his foreign contacts would have been the man to have effected it.

Basically he was not a very talented writer or even a very courageous one. In drama his importance is chiefly negative. He explains why plays were not written, as he and his group of fellow radicals explain why revolutionary art did not appear in Britain in that vital, vulnerable period before The Terror and the French war: they probably never at heart wanted a revolution to succeed.

With his translations of Trenck and The Secret History Holcroft did something to establish the term 'German' as applicable to a certain genre of novel writing. His wisest and most disinterested service to literature may well have been almost his last: the introduction of Goethe to Britain in a courageous experiment in blank verse. Herman and Dorothea is the poem of Goethe's which Gessner would most have enjoyed: the ultimate 'Idyl' and natural conclusion of a simplifying strain in English writing followed since 1761 by the translators from the German.

The central frailty of the Anglo-German interaction was the reluctance of any writer of real talent to engage with it for any length of time. The enormous success of Sheridan's brief dalliance with Kotzebue's Rollas Tod demonstrates this. Holcroft, as a highly active mediocrity, has, for want of a better, to be studied to see what might have been achieved. Even his caution illustrates the nature of his contemporary literary society.

CHAPTER SIX

Fuseli in the disenchanted aftermath of his mission

When he had published, in 1765 and 1767, his translation of Winckelmann's Gedanken and followed that up, in 1768, with his excellent version of the set piece on the Apollo in Belvedere, John Henry Fuseli had achieved his aim of delivering the theory and the inspiration of neo-Classicism to his adopted country. In his own mind he must have decided that he was at the end of his literary career, and so he proceeded deliberately to concentrate on his artistic talents. But while he had no very substantial future role in the process of translating German literature into English he remained so animated, and animating, in artistic and literary circles that his later years demand a brief chapter. From 1778, the date of his return from Rome he moves into an area of literary and art history as closely surveyed as that around the young Wordsworth and Coleridge, so there is very little new material to be brought forward. A man, however, who wrote what can be considered the only sustained piece of Sturm und Drang prose in the English language, who popularised the Aphorism in our literature and influenced Blake, obscurely but potently, in Blakes most brilliant period of writing, 1788-1798, then casually dropped into one of his reviews the first factual and detailed account of Gothick Mysteries at the Prussian court in 1789, cannot be dismissed in a few pages of some general chapter. After 1765 Fuseli was not a spent force but he was intermittently engaged.

His version of the Apollo description, published in the Universal Museum[1] in 1768, has been considered in the second chapter of this study

1. The Universal Museum, VII (1768), p.56.

as essentially Sturm und Drang in its uninhibited enthusiasm and its straining, rapturous prose rhythms. Unfortunately Fuseli's finest Sturm und Drang prose in English had been published a year before this to be either scorned or ignored in the reviews and to have many of its copies accidentally burnt. This was his book Remarks on the Writing and Conduct of J.J. Rousseau (London, 1767). He can have had little confidence himself in this daringly experimental work as he published it anonymously, denied its authorship to John Armstrong and attempted to suggest in a review which he wrote himself, anonymously, for the Critical Review that it had been written by Sterne. It would be unwise to treat a book presented so deviously too seriously. It is not an actual translation from the German, but, as the work of a translator now attempting to transplant a current German prose style into English non-fiction, it needs some consideration. There is nothing quite like it in the language before Carlyle. It could be described as 'poetic prose' but its impact is quite unlike the elegant English versions of Gessner's Idyls. It grows organically on the compost of its own rhetoric: a flowing stream of consciousness where the images flash with a fire of their own, rarely illumining the argument. It is a wilder Religio Medici a more fluent Anatomy of Melancholy; it is, in three words, Sturm und Drang.

A recent editor of its last four chapters, Karl S. Guthke, introducing the work for The Augustan Reprint Society, hails the book generously: it

> literally elbows its way through the superficial and often prejudiced pros and cons of the time to a critical understanding of Rousseau's philosophy, an understanding which is definitely unique in its acumen and penetration; more than that: its insights in many essential points reach nothing less than what might be loosely termed the modern concept of Rousseau.[1]

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1. The Augustan Reprint Society, Publication Number 82 (Los Angeles, 1960).

The book was ostensibly written to defend Rousseau from critics who took the philosopher's attack on the benefits of Science and Civilization too literally, and assumed that he was urging a return to naked savagery and to scrambling around on all fours delving for roots. But an editor's summary of the message is useful as, without it, the eye and mind tend to be dazzled and deflected by the incessant play of wit and image. The Political Register[1] confessed that 'on some occasions we do not understand the writer, and are inclined to suspect he does not always understand himself. It is turgid with scarce an idea to support its swelling; it is figurative after which no imagination can paint its ideas'[2]. After quoting a passage from Fuseli's Preface 'too gross to deserve a remark', it gave a fine flight of imagery on its own account:

> this happy tincture in the commencement, spreads itself through the whole performance, like the emetic quality of a copper kettle to the broath which has been boiled in it, and sickens every reader whose stomach has the least sensibility of what is palatable.[3]

The writing, which the Register owned was 'new and original', is closer to the character of Fuseli's paintings than anything else which he wrote. It is fascinating as an example of what he must have meant when he insisted on the overriding importance of 'the image', for rich images of violence and squalor elbow each other, half realised, on every paragraph:

> Dive from the turnkeys of state - the nobles that demand what right God has to be God - the chaplains that anthem the 'thing' - down to mudflush'd crews of the news-flag, or the frantic clubs of clerks and prentices destined for a fly sh-t mouth at Juliet's balcony - dive - and tell me - what are the ravings of nature to the politician? the virulence of morality to the herds of pleasure? what to the man of business the implacability of duty? - Cursed marplots they are - and long ago have been kicked out of all good company - Their ha-ha's yawn so ghastly upon ye.....[4]

1. The Political Register, Vol 1 (1767), pp.39-40.
2. Ibid, p.40.
3. Ibid, p.40.
4. Remarks from J.H. Fuseli Bemerkungen über J.J. Rousseaus Schriften und Verhalten (Zurich, 1962), p.67.

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This is not the clumsiness of a foreigner writing English but rather that 'outsideness' of Conrad and Nabokov, that seems to relish the images the more for their novelty, and comes to the vocabulary with the freshness of a sophisticated child. As usual the rhetoric is superb: 'to promulgate her laws and wield her phaenomenons, to enjoy the music of the spheres - and to feel the pulse of a tadpole[1]', and as usual there is a light scattering of earthy 'naughtiness' over all; 'and the pickled politicks of your Hermophrodites; were it only to save you from being swept along by a peacock's tail, stung to death by snails, or ravished by tye twigs.'[2] Often there is almost a G M Hopkins return to Saxon compression: 'Society was a sea storm, flesh fishified, shark and fry: - or when he led you on shore, 'twas to the wilds of nature, the aborigines of earth, the savage sons of pity'[3]. On all the brief pages there is this ferment of images carried on a torrent of lewd anger.

In his attack on Voltaire (Pansophe):

'better had you,on four, been kicked to atoms by some splenetic son of Bileams-than to have raised yourself on two legs to dress the supper of Conculix; to paint the buttocks of Chando's page; to erect the tremendous idol of Joan's celestial lover; to act the upholsterer of Candid's bedchamber; or to find a maidenhead in Circassia only to make its owner tell us in Norwegen it was carried off by a tiger.[4]'

There are at least eight images jostling for notice, none of them fully realised, and here the writer's mind is clearly as much upon the scatological images as upon the bare sense of what he is saying. Indeed the images chain together much like those in a piece of mature Shakespearian verse.

The harsh fact about the Remarks was, however, that it was not liked,

1. Henry Fuseli, Remarks (Zurich, 1962), p.72.
2. Ibid, p.73.
3. Ibid, p.77.
4. Ibid, p.76.

it was not wanted, it left no progeny and when, much later, in 1801, Fuseli had to deliver his lectures on the History of Art, he wrote them in wholly conventional periods with just a touch only of Winckelmann's empathy:

> In Raphael, creation is complete - Eve is presented to Adam, now awake: but neither the new born charms, the submissive grace and virgin purity of the beauteous image: nor the awful presence of her Introductor, draw him from his mental trance into effusions of love and gratitude; at ease reclined, with fingers pointing at himself and his new mate, he seems to methodize the surprising event that took place during his sleep, and to whisper the words 'flesh of my flesh'.[1]

By the time he wrote this Fuseli's style had reformed with his politics. He was a man of the artistic establishment who had taken the Professorship of Painting at the Royal Academy, after Barry had been expelled in 1799 for his Radical outlook. He was disciplining his invention, having found that it was not sympathetic to the English. Haydon wrote of him after his death:

> His great delight was conception, not embodying his conceptions, and as soon as he rendered a conception intelligible to himself and others by any means he flew off to a fresh one, too impatient to endure the meditation required fully to develop it. To such a temperament nature was an annoyance, because she is an irrefutable reproach to extravagance and untruth ... He was an intense egotist as all mannerists must be.[2]

Haydon's analysis is helpful about the nature of a man who could write a translation in 1765 of the theories of simplicity and grandeur, and then, in 1767, write the untrimmed riot and irreverence of the Remarks. Fuseli's ideas about art and nature are important if it is assumed that he had a strong influence upon Blake's view of this relationship and upon Blake's application of it in his writing and painting. Fuseli was a 'mannerist' in his prose as in his painting. His Remarks are as stylised

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1. Henry Fuseli P.P., Lectures on Painting (London, 1801), p.132.
2. Benjamin Robert Haydon, 'Thoughts on Fuseli's Death', The Mind of Henry Fuseli, p.75.

and frantic as his 'Shepherd's Dream', his 'Conversion of St. Paul' or 'Hephaestus Dia and Crato securing Prometheus to Mount Caucasus'[1]. He retained from his translation of Winckelmann's Gedanken an aversion to the direct copying of Nature; he copied the Ideal, which in practice meant the images of his wild mind. Because of this trick of painting a mannered ideal, essentially a neo-Classical method, his popularity as a painter was fading by 1799. This was when his project for a Milton Gallery, on the lines of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, collapsed. That was because he was out of tune with the spirit of an age which enjoyed Morland's genre peasantry and Lawrence's calm portraiture. But his earlier mannered writing would have been just as out of tune in a decade when Southey and Wordsworth were having their written success with genre peasantry and the calm simplicity of rural dignity.

What is confusing is that Fuseli's taut unnatural style of painting and Wordsworth's careful, 'natural' simplicity were both legitimate, though separate,expressions of neo-Classicism. Almost all Fuseli's paintings restrict themselves to nude figures, or figures whose nudity is apparent under the tension of their clothes, performing in a misty void with virtually no natural background. Winckelmann would have had to approve of these at least. And the simplicity and grandeur of Wordsworth's peasantry, epitomised in Michael, the final neo-Classical poem, is undeniable. Neo-Classicism has two faces: the nude heroic or Homeric, and the pastoral rustic, or Theocritan, Gessnerian.

The sad casualty in this chain of incidents was possibly Blake. Wordsworth became a figure of powerful influence in his originality, and it was part of his contemporaneity that he thought little of Fuseli, making him the subject of careful jokes.[2] Coleridge reacted similarly;

1. Respectively: 1793, oil, Tate Gallery; 1770, pen and wash, British Museum; 1810, pen, pencil and wash, Auckland City Gallery.
2. When Haydon told Wordsworth Canova's opinion: that Fuseli had more flame and Raphael more fire (fuoco), Wordsworth replied 'He forgot the third, and that is il fumo, of which Fuseli has plenty'. Haydon's Diaries, quoted Mind of Henry Fuseli, p.40.

he dismissed Fuseli as 'Fuzzly'. But Blake, for all his originality, had very little influence in his own time, and he was an admirer of Fuseli. Blake is a most complex figure, and only the most tentative suggestions can be made to explain perhaps a very small part of his complexity; but part of the reason for his unimportance as a poet and a painter in his own time must be that he did not describe nature directly but used the 'ideal' forms of his own imagination. Like Fuseli he was a mannerist at a time when mannerism was unfashionable; like Fuseli too he caught again and again at images rather than descriptions. It is possible that Fuseli was both the making and the unmaking of Blake, and that Blake is in some measure a reflection of Fuseli's strange combination of Sturm und Drang effusion and neo-Classical restraint. If this were true then Blake could be considered the oustanding example of the influence of translations from the German on an English literary figure. But this whole argumentdepends upon a number of large leaps, and, by a similar series of ambitious unprovables, Wordsworth, via Taylor of Norwich, Gessner and Schiller, can be considered as another example of the influence of German translations, but the translations of different Germans.

What can be said about the links between Blake and Fuseli is that 'the relationship was closest from about 1788 until the end of the 1790s, but it was less a friendship of equals than a cordial acquaintanceship between an eminent painter and man of the world and a bizarre but entertaining engraver'.[1] Blake supplied a frontispiece for Fuseli's translation of John Caspar Lavater's Aphorisms on Man which was published in London in 1788. It is a simple engraving but in it many of the mannerist devices, which Fuseli had been using since the 1760s, appear: a nude male figure flying without wings, with a whirl and swoop of Rococo curlicues and

1. David Bindman, Blake as an Artist (Oxford, 1977), p.104.

his head downward, the stress upon knees, the lengthening of one leg and the foreshortening of the other, the near nudity beneath a tight body stocking. These are all features which would appear frequently in Blake's later gouaches but they are quite unlike the homely early manner of the illustrations to the Songs of Innocence.

The style of the book which Fuseli had just translated, the Aphorisms, may have had almost as much influence upon Blake's writing as the instructions which Fuseli must have given him in the engraving of the frontispiece had upon his art. The book was published by Joseph Johnson, and it makes some play with the closeness of Fuseli's relationship with Lavater. The dedication page 'To Henry Fuseli, A.M.' begins:

> Take, dear observer of men, from the hand of your unbiassed friend, this testimony of esteem for your genius ... in what concerns the knowledge of mankind we are nearer to one another than any two in ten thousand.[1]

and expressly gives Fuseli 'liberty not only to make improvements, but to omit what you think false or unimportant.'[2] This Dedication was reprinted in full in the review of the book in the Analytical Review[3]. This periodical had just been founded by Joseph Johnson, and Fuseli contributed, under the cover of various initials, between sixty and eighty reviews to it over the next ten years. He may well have reviewed this, his own translation, as he seems to have conceived of the Aphorisms as being almost as much to his own credit as to Lavater's. An 'Advertisement', which was also reprinted in full in the Analytical Review, adds:

> It is the intention of the editor to add another volume of Aphorisms on Art, with characters and examples, not indeed by the same author, which the reader may expect in the course of the year. May 1788.[4]

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1. John Caspar Lavater, Aphorisms on Man (London, 1788), p.iii. Trans. by Henry Fuseli.
2. Ibid, p.IV.
3. Analytical Review, Vol. 1 (1788), pp.286-89.
4. Ibid, p.287.

It seems likely that Fuseli was hoping to publish his own Aphorisms to follow Lavater's. His 'Aphorisms chiefly relative to the fine arts', were not actually published until after his death. John Knowles included them in his Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli[1]. They are mostly concerned with painting, poetry or the theatre, but their style is indistinguishable from Lavater's:

> 47. Creation gives, invention finds existence.
> 57. Glitter is the refuge of the mean.
> 80. The temple of expression, like that of religion, has a portico and a sanctuary; that is trod by all, this only admits her votaries.
> 91. The axe, the wheel, saw-dust, and the blood stained sheet are not legitimate substitutes of terror.[2]

So Fuseli not only translated these gnomic forms of expressing wisdom or concealing its absence, he wrote them himself and probably wrote them in 1788, before Blake wrote his Proverbs of Hell[3].

Blake's Annotations to Lavater[4] prove how closely he had studied the aphorisms and how spontaneously he responded to them. They are literally the breeding ground of his Proverbs of Hell. The aphorism, which had made no appearance in Blake's writing before 1788, is a trick of style which may modify the actual process of a mind indulging in them. In their brevity and their paradoxical compression they are arrogant and defensive. In the best of them the reader's critical sense is subdued, before it can rally, by a glittering image. Apparently they were common in Fuseli's table talk, and this seems probable as he loved to contradict, he loved images and he was undoubtedly arrogant.

Blake deployed the aphorism more brilliantly than either of his

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1. The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli, M.A.R.A. 3 vols. edited by J. Knowles (London, 1831).
2. Ibid, iii, p.78, p.81, p.82, p.91.
3. Etched about 1790-1793, though they could have been written earlier.
4. Written about 1788; all quotations from these are taken from Blake Complete Writings, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford, 1974).

tutors; but it is possible that the habit of mind gained from writing them separated him even further from the world of ordinary poetic communication. The aphorism escapes logic and encourages the instinctive but unsupported intuition. There is an oracular self satisfaction inherent in the form which could be dangerous to a mind already inclined to isolation. There are links between Lavater, the Proverbs, Blake's response to SwedenbOrg's paradoxical utterance and Blake's huge expense of poetic effort on the Prophetic Books. These last may have been a waste of his powers or a triumphant achievement, according to critical standpoint. Haydon's comment on Fuseli, quoted earlier, may be relevant: 'He was an intense egotist as all mannerists must be.'

Blake's first responses to the Fuseli-Lavater Aphorisms tend to be simple: 'All gold!', 'Excellent', 'Damn sneerers!', 'I doubt this', 'Bravo', or 'Uneasy'. Then the infection of the style seizes him and he begins to try out his own hand at the method: 'There is no other devil; he who bites without praying is only a beast', swinging his observation around the pivot of the semi-colon. Then he finds the plain statement unsatisfying and follows up, 'A man must first deceive himself before he is thus Superstitious and so he is a hypocrite', with the image illumined, 'Hypocrisy is as distant from superstition as the wolf from the lamb'. A little later, in this response to the five hundred and thirty second aphorism, he is producing the raw rock from which he will quarry out some of the most satisfying Proverbs of Hell:

> 'Deduct from a rose its redness, from a lily its whiteness, from a diamond its hardness, from a spunge its softness, from an oak its heighth, from a daisy its lowness, and rectify everything in Nature as the Philosophers do, and then we shall return to Chaos, and God will be compell'd to be Excentric if he Creates, O happy Philosopher.
>
> Variety does not necessarily suppose deformity, for a rose and a lily are various and both beautiful. Beauty is exuberant, but not

> of ugliness but of beauty, and if ugliness is adjoin'd to beauty it is not the exuberance of beauty;'[1]

He has exemplar for this device of the enlivening image in the Aphorisms which he is studying:

> 477 The frigid smiler, crawling, indiscreet, obtrusive, brazen faced, is a scorpion whip of destiny - avoid him!
> 63 A still Rabies is more dangerous than the paroxisms of a fever.

but he uses the effect with far more concrete enrichment in his own work:

> The cistern contains: the fountain overflows.
> The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn of the crow.
> The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow; nor the lion, the horse, how he shall take his prey.[2]

Blake may not have acquired this feeling for an image simply from these German aphorisms in Fuseli's translation. The central importance of the image in creativity had long been a fixation of Fuseli's. There is a relevant section of a letter which Fuseli wrote in 1775 to Lavater from Paris. Anxious to bring his friend up to date in German literary affairs and to have his opinion on admired new works Lavater had sent Fuseli Götz, Werther and Klopstock's Odes. Fuseli did not often enjoy rival genius and characteristically in his letter of reply he made absolutely no mention of the Goethe books, though he had clearly read them because he quotes from them in his usual jackdaw fashion.[3] What he did write, though, was an analysis of the importance of the images to a poet. Lavater sent the letter on to Goethe, who wrote to Herder: 'Here dear brother,

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1. Blake Complete Writings, p.81.
2. Ibid, p.151.
3. Eudo Mason, The mind of Henry Fuseli (London, 1951).

is a magnificent letter of Fuseli's, ... what fire and fury the man has!'[1]

So, clearly, Fuseli thought deeply and often about the nature of poetry and his comments could have had an influence even on someone as obstinately individual as Blake. By this time Fuseli had turned completely against Klopstock's 'eternal variations on the invocation Lord! Lord!'[2]; sentimental lamentation was out. In its place Fuseli had theorised logically in favour of his own trick of fertile image spinning:

> Images - the images which you (not you personally, but the Germans as a whole and the Swiss too) despise, the images you cannot invent - are what make Homer the Father of all poetry, Homer and also the Song of Solomon and the Book of Job; they it is that authenticate the value of emotions. A geniune, universal, vital emotion streams through the medium of an appropriate image into all hearts, while a spurious, merely local and private emotion will please only a few, and those in special places and periods, and must bewilder and benumb everybody else.[3]

It is possible that the extreme separateness of Blake's Note-book of 1793 from anything else being written in England at that time stems from an attempt to fill his verse with images, while avoiding direct observation of nature and 'private emotion'.

A less important but suggestive instance of Fuseli's influence of Blake is the poem 61 on page five of the Note Book 1793. This begins:

> When Klopstock England defied
> Uprose terrible Blake in his pride
> For old Nobodaddy aloft
> Farted and Belch'd and cough'd.

After various pieces of mild scatology it ends with a defiant flourish highly uncharacteristic of Blake: 'If Blake could do this when he rose up from shite/What might he not do if he sat down to write?'[4]

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1. Eudo Mason, The Mind of Henry Fuseli (London, 1951), p.361.
2. Ibid, p.93.
3. Ibid, p.93.
4. Blake Complete Writings, p. 186.

This verse seems to betray two influences of Fuseli. The first is his contempt for Klopstock's obscure religious poetry, particularly the Messiah[1], for why else should Blake have attacked a pietist certainly no more inspirationally eccentric than he was himself? The second is Fuseli's pleasure in schoolboy bawdiness, exemplified in his 1778 drawing of himself, a nude giant, excreting into a close stool labelled 'Switzerland'. Trivial as are the poem and the sketch they are signs of that unhappy trick of Fuseli's of combining obscenity with his painting and his writing. This tended to distance society; it is possible to see why he and Blake accorded closely, but unfortunately they lived in an England which was, at least superficially, genteel.

The documentation of their relationship is meagre. Blake wrote wryly of Fuseli, he 'is not naturally good natured, but he is artificially very ill natured.'[2] Farrington records in his Diary:

> Fuseli called on me last night and sat till 12 o'clock. He mentioned Blake, the Engraver, whose genius and invention have been much spoken of. Fuseli has known him several years and thinks he has a great deal of invention, but that fancy is the end and not the means in his designs. He does not employ it to give novelty and decoration to regular conceptions but the whole of his aim is to produce singular shapes and odd combinations.

This entry in Farrington[3] is dated 24 June 1796, and suggests that the time when the two men were in artistic accord had passed, if it had ever existed.

In many, perhaps even in most, respects Fuseli was Blake's opposite. He strongly disbelieved in ghosts and spirits, while including their memorable

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1. In 1765 Fuseli had already described Klopstock's visions as 'the most grotesque of all religions, quintessenced schoolman's jargon, the court idiom of the pietist's heaven, the gallimatia of a brain softened by apocalyptic weeping, bursting bubbles with no other meaning than their own pop!' from a letter to Solomon Dalliker, quoted in translation by P. Tomory, The Life and Art of Henry Fuseli (London, 1972), p.14.
2. Blake to Cumberland, 2 July 1800, David Bindman Blake and Artist, p.106.
3. Joseph Farrington R.A., The Farrington Diary (New York, 1922) edited by James Grieg, Vol.1.

and appalling shapes on half his canvases. Blake would chat to dead prophets through his bedroom window. Fuseli would never represent God in his pictures. Blake deliberately confused Good and Evil while Fuseli considered that the divinity of Christianity was proved by the loveliness of its morality. On Greek and Gothic, Reynolds and Constable, they were at loggerheads. Blake filled his whole life and work with an elaborately revealed personal religion. Fuseli had no patience with Klopstock's intensely subjective religiosity.

But set against this, many of the actual shapes and poses of Blake's angels are lighter tracings of Fuseli's daemons. To hear a point of view was, for Fuseli, to contradict it. It is impossible that a man who painted what he painted could have been the mild and satisfied deist that he claimed to be. Blake insists, in the teeth of Sir Joshua, that art should be concerned only with the particular, Fuseli said it should be with the general. In practice they both painted much the same things because neither believed that the true artist drew from nature.

Because he left Germany in 1764, and then went his highly individual way, Fuseli remained a classicist in theory into the 1790s. Because he avoided direct contact with nature he had to resort to an unclassical world of interior monsters drawn from books like the Divine Comedy, Shakespeare's plays and the Nibelungen for the subjects of his paintings. Something of this kind happened to Blake as a painter and as a poet. If he was concerned with 'the particular', then it was with a wildly interior and individual 'particular'; and because, like Fuseli, he did not draw from nature he had to retreat to a world of particular fantasies. Fuseli clung to the accepted great literatures of Europe. Blake invented his own. This is the essence of T.S. Eliot's criticism of him: that his isolation and individual strength made him create a private cosmology which means little to a European mind trained to respond to Jove, Jupiter or Odin.

It is undesirable and impossible to estimate whether Fuseli was a 'good' or a 'bad' influence on Blake. Benjamin Haydon's famous description of Fuseli suggests how consolidating his influence might have been on existing traits of eccentricity, and how total was his egocentricity. The account, from Haydon's Diary, 27 April 1812, has the painter at work:

> in his blindness he would put a hideous smear of Prussian blue in his flesh, take a bit of red to deaden it, and then prying close in, turn round to me and say, 'By Gode, dat's a fine purple! it's vary like Correggio, by Gode!' and then all of a sudden, he would burst out with a quotation from Homer, Tasso, Dante, Ovid, Virgil or perhaps the 'Nibelungen', and thunder round to me with 'paint dat!' I found him the most grotesque mixture of literature, art, scepticism, indelicacy, profanity and kindess ... Weak minds he destroyed.

For all his wide acquaintance with the famous Fuseli was rarely appreciative of other living creative minds. He had been writing reviews in the Analytical Review since 1788, on unimportant works, like Zimmerman's record of his visit to the dying King of Prussia; but it was not until August 1798 that he may have accorded Goethe a review of Stella[1]. This combined an appreciation of 'the distinguishing excellence of this celebrated writer' and 'his pencil dipped in the bow of heaven', with ridicule of 'the first interview', which 'is so extremely foreign to English manners at least that it may appear, as it did to us, unnatural and absurd.'[2]

If the general record of Fuseli's reviews is a disappointment he did make a last contribution to the exchange of Anglo-German literary themes in his review of Thomas Holcroft's translation of Mirabeau's The Secret History of the Court of Berlin.

This work was considered in the last chapter of this study. It should, because it dealt with dreadful revelations of secret societies and faked

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1. Analytical Review, XXVIIII (1798), p.170.
2. Ibid, p.170. The review is signed L.L. which Eudo Mason attributes 'pretty certainly' to Fuseli, but the tone is not his.

spiritualism, have familiarised the British with what was to become the characteristic subject matter of the 'German' Gothic novels of the 1790s, and perhaps thereby have whetted the appetite of British readers for accounts of such deceits and plotting. In fact, such was Holcroft's basic moral humanism that he employed rows of asterisks where he could have pleased his readers with sensations.

Fuseli's review of May 1789[1] was devious, but it conveyed the full atmosphere of charlatanry and contrived phantoms which Holcroft had missed out. Fuseli included the scandalous material in his review by a device. In Holcroft's two volumes the Secret History is followed by a wholly blameless and rather dull Appendix in which Mirabeau offers good political advice to the young King Frederick Louis on the occasion of his coronation. But in his review Fuseli quotes at length from a completely different Appendix, which certainly was never included in the Holcroft volumes and was never, in fact, translated into English, though Fuseli manages to make it seem that the purchaser of his friend Holcroft's worthy volumes will be able to enjoy these revelations. This additional 'Appendix' is a French book, supposedly, but improbably, published in Potsdam 1789, called 'Correspondence pour servir de suite à l'histore secrète de la Cour de Berlin[2]. Holcroft should certainly have included it with his translation if he had been interested in kindling a prurient interest in German affairs.

In his extracts from this Correspondence Fuseli cuts out the viciously anti-semitic accounts of Jewish money lenders prostituting their wives and daughters to the sons of the Prussian aristocracy, but he does give a full account of the way in which spirits and magical voices were made

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1. Analytical Review, IV (1789), p.80. This is signed R.R., used 27 times between 1789 and 1798.
2. Anonymous. The French were fascinated already at this early date, by secret societies in Germany. See Essai sur la secte des Illuminés (Paris, 1789), probably by La Roche du Maines and reviewed by Mirabeau.

to emanate and deceive the gullible king with ghostly advice. This is exactly the kind of material which some of the later 'German' novels use.

It is possible that Fuseli was, uncharacteristically, doing Holcroft, who was certainly an acquaintance of his, a good turn by writing this deceptively sensational review for an expensive two volume book, which may not have been selling well. This is only speculation; Fuseli's tale remains a hard fact, and a further pointer to the force of French influence in what is often considered a German genre.

It deserves to be quoted in full. According to the tenth letter of the Correspondence the corrupt king's ex valet, Woolner, is the villain.

> Woolner has built in the recesses of his house a mysterious saloon, for the purpose of evocating spirits and to celebrate the secret rights (sic) of Jesuitism. Dubosc is the high priest of this Rosicrucian temple, where magic presides. This enchanting place is of a square form, one of its sides furnished with small stoves to consummate the mysteries of fumigation. The middle is raised, and on that elevation the spirit appears under a white veil, a veil wove in France, the only land whose manufacturers can suit spirits; under this veil a person rises on the hill, when the sacred hour approaches, and twinkles on the fascinated eye of the deluded spectator. The imposter who performs this gross part, is a ventriloquist, and well imitates that ubiquity of language with which credulity has organised spirits. The corners of the temple are hung with magic glasses that reflect the forms of those who are to be conjured. At these cabalistic toys a great personage frequently assists; but such are the terrors of the ceremony that the ventriloquist Steinert found it necessary to support and comfort the spirits of the royal proselyte by a restorative elixir of his own composition: for this mystic philtre he enjoys a pension of 500 dollars. His reward for making the hollow dome resound with names and formulae, is only known to his employers, who fill his mouth with spells, and whirl the forms of their elect along the enchanted mirrors.[1]

The last sentence alone indicates why Fuseli was delighted by the passage: 'and whirl the forms of their elect along the enchanted mirrors' is wonderfully evocative of just those airy rococo shapes which haunt his own paintings.[2] There is little general literary substance for the

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1. Analytical Review, IV (May, 1789), p.85.
2. Such as his paintings of the fairies in Midsummer Nights Dream and the elves of Milton's simile describing the demons in Pandemonium.

notion that the Gothic novels of the 1790s are 'German' in any deep ancestry.[1] Certain elements in Matthew Lewis's The Monk have been emphasised, originally by Lewis himself. Others, like its Spanish setting, have been minimised. But there is no doubt that German names and settings were popular in the middle of the 1790s for Gothic novels; and a number of German novels of the Gothic type were translated successfully. The reading public, for a time, associated Germany with devious spiritualistic trickery. Fuseli's review seems to have been the first intimation of this.

By this time Fuseli seems to have considered himself only as a painter. His literary embassy was long over. He appears to have despaired of both English and German contemporary literature, a victim of his own arrogant, high standards. He gave up Germany almost as soon as he settled in London. A letter to Dalliker of November 1765 reads 'Since I have been in England, German literature has ceased to exist for me.'[2] Yet he was prepared to use the writings of a personal German friend as late as the Aphorisms of 1788.

He was almost equally disillusioned with English poetry after his first period, 1764-70, in London, and so he blinkered himself to the developments in the literature of both countries. In a letter to Lavater of March 1775 he wrote sweeping away most of the poets he had come to England to admire. 'The English don't boast that they have produced a poet yet in this century unless it be Richardson. Thomson's tame catalogue, which has so often been translated to you, Young's pyramids of dough, Pope's metrical and rimed prose - they don't call them poetry by a long chalk, just as little as they would concede that title to the tearful prettiness

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1. In another review, of Love's Victims: the Hermit's Story, Analytical Review, XVI (1793), p.163, Fuseli shows how aware he is of the Gothic novel's long native roots in England 'To people gothic mansions with a modern race, to deliver the prattle of boarding schools and colleges in affected verse or quainter prose have been for nearly a century the relentless practice of male and female dealers in novels and romance.'
2. Letter in German to Dalliker, November 1765. Mind of Henry Fuseli, p.90.

of Wieland and Gessner[1] - and so God help you!'[2].

This was a wonderfully perceptive appraisal for a foreigner to give. His admiration for Shakespeare, still living in the mouth of Garrick, was so complete that contemporary writing shrank, in his eyes, to pigmy size. He must have been driven to painting from sheer despair over ink. Yet against our admiration for his ruthless honesty must be set an awareness that he was the contemporary of writers like Goethe, Schiller, and Bürger, whom he was uniquely well qualified to enjoy; Coleridge's Ancyent Mariner cried out for his illustration, and his contradictory dogmaticism left him wholly opposed to Wordsworth's aims and originality. His own intense talent for the English language had been quenched by disappointment as early as 1767. His name must be added to those of Mackenzie and Holcroft as half hearted patrons of a cause which required whole-hearted enthusiasm and an open minded critical perception. It was partly by the stumbling of these three, all of them, by 1790, old men of an earlier sensibility, that German literature came lame, unselected and inappropriate into Britain in the 1790s. Of the three, Fuseli, by his linguistic advantages and the potential sympathy of his imagination, is the most frustrating failure.

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1. In his review (Analytical Review, V and VI Dec 1789 & Feb 1790) of Coxe's Travels in Switzerland, Fuseli quotes Coxe's comment that Gessner's Idyles 'are translated into every language and will be admired by future ages as long as there remains a relish for true pastoral simplicity', and adds 'To this effusion of Mr. C. we subscribe with fervour, remarking only that of all his works the Death of Abel, though most known, is the weakest in our opinion. The mouth of Gessner, formed to inspire the flute with melody, was unable to animate the trumpet, he sunk under the supernatural machinery which invigorated Milton, and after him Klopstock and Bodmer'.
2. Mind of Henry Fuseli, p.90.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The nature and influence of The Speculator (1790)

Several works, notably the translation of Wieland's Agathon, 1773, included in their introductions a compressed survey of German literature, but The Speculator was the only book published in England or Scotland in the 18th century expressly to present a survey of recent and significant German writing. It came out in 1790 and began to appear in parts before the first publication of Henry Mackenzie's lecture, Account of the German Theatre. That was printed in the same year, as an article in the Transactions of the Royal Society Edinburgh, not as a separate book. The Speculator's only other rival as a proselytizing force for the German influence is the bulk of William Taylor's reviews; but these last did not begin to appear until 1793 and they straggled out over a period of many years. The Speculator's particular importance is that it came out at the very beginning of the German decade and by its peculiar composition and character it struck a note of critical confusion which was to be typical of the British response to German writing for the next ten years. It is possible that The Speculator's unhappy combination of articles of enthusiastic critical analysis with poems and stories, often in laughably exaggerated style, led directly to the ridicule of George Canning and John Hookham Frere's The Rovers, 1798, with all that that satire did to the reputation of German literature.

The Speculator first appeared as a bi-weekly magazine, coming out in twenty six parts between 27 March 1790 and 22 June 1790; it was then immediately published, before it had received any notices in the review columns of other periodicals, as an octavo volume, printed for T. and J. Evans of London. This prompt publication of the periodical as a book indicates a purposefulness in its authors; but it is with these two authors, clearly determined as they were to bring the best and most recent German authors to the attention of British readers and to suggest their relevance to British

letters, that the dualism and the confusion around The Speculator begins.

After each of the twenty six parts, or chapters, is one of three letters: an H, an S or an N. There is no mystery about the N author. He was Nathan Drake M.D., an archetypal literary hack; and he was responsible for most of the dubious poems and stories in the book. He went on to boast of his joint authorship in Essays Biographical, Critical and Historical illustrative of the Rambler, Adventurer and Idler, published in London, 1810. There were to be many more volumes of essays to his name but The Speculator was his first book. Almost all of the parts of The Speculator which deal with German literature have the letters H or S after them, though the letter S also appears after one poem, On a deserted woman, and after three essays which have no German theme: one on Timon of Athens and two on the nature of satire.

In his Essays, Biographical, written twenty years later, Drake speaks of The Speculator as 'the composition of myself and a gentleman, whose name, were I permitted to divulge it, would do honour to any branch of literature or science'; so there is a clear statement that H and S were one and the same person. In a later chapter the possibility that H was William Taylor of Norwich and S was his friend Frank Sayers will be considered. Taylor himself in his Historic Survey of German Poetry[1] states that Dr Ash translated the passage from Schiller's Cabal and Love in The Speculator but he attributes none of the other translations to Ash or to anyone else, and Taylor was sometimes obsessively anonymous. Cushings Anonyms[2] states that Drake's co-author was Edward Ash M.D., 1770-1849, that he gained his M.D. at Oxford in 1796 and settled in London. Foster's Alumini Uni v. Oxon, says that he was the son of Samuel Ashe of St. Andrew's Holborn, that he matriculated at Christ Church on 18 April 1782 when he was aged seventeen, so he must have

1. W. Taylor, Historic Survey of German Poetry, 2 vols. (London, 1830), iii, 178.
2. W. Cushing, Anonyms, 2 vols (London, 1890), ii, 639.
3. Dr. L.A. Willoughby 'Kabale und Liebe in English Translation' in Transactions of the English Goethe Society Vol.1. (1924), 44-66, adds that Ash discovered the principles of galvinism though Humboldt published them in 1797.

been born in 1765. He took his B.A. in 1786 and M.A. in 1788. His name disappears from the battels books between 1789 and 1791, the relevant volume is missing. He moved to University College and began to spell his name Ash. There he was elected to a Radcliffe Travelling Fellowship on 8 June 1790 and became M.B. and M.D. in 1796.[1] Maty, the editor of the New Review which, in its brief life-span,had done much to inform the British public of German writings, had also been a Radcliffe Fellow. The fellowship had been established in the reign of Queen Anne to enable a Master of Arts 'entered on the Physic line' to 'travel for his better improvement'.

Wherever he went with his fellowship Ash seems to have published nothing else and there is no clue in the records as to where, if he was H and S, he acquired his very sensitive gift for accurate translation from the German before his travels began. The Bodleian does, however, have a single number of what seems to be a revived Speculator dated September 1801. The format is exactly the same as that of the 1790 numbers and the, still anonymous, author claims to be 'a person considerably past the meridian of life, during forty years practice in one of those which are commonly called the learned professions.'[2] This could not be Ash if he was born in 1765. This revived Speculator is notably disenchanted with the German cause and speaks of Goethe's Sorrows of Werter as 'of very mischievous tendency'.[3] The H author in 1790, writing also of Werter, spoke of 'the same glow of passion, and beautiful simplicity, which distinguish that singular production'[4]. If the same man wrote in 1790 and 1801, the disillusionment

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1. Information from Mrs. June Wells, Assistant Archivist at Christ Church and Dr L.G. Mitchell, Fellow of University College and Praelector in Modern History.
2. The Speculator, (London, 1801), p.i.
3. Ibid, p.15.
4. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.152.

which he has clearly suffered about the moral tone of Goethe's writing might account for the way in which the H and S author went into eclipse. He was so ardent for German writing in 1790 that he helped produce a magazine - - book, making far and away the most literate and influential contributions to it himself; but, in just those years of the nineties when his voice might have been expected to be heard often, he was silent. The mystery remains.

The H and S author was an incisive analyst and a persuasive enthusiast, while Nathan Drake was something of an intellectual butterfly, but it would be a mistake to think that the two writers were not working firmly together in The Speculator to a pre-arranged design. After H's introductory essay Drake produced a mock German fragment of his own as an appetiser before the critical writing. The 'Maria of Ruysdale' story is clearly intended as an English echo of the translation of Goethe's Clavigo which precedes it. Similarly Drake's idyllic episode by Lake Grassmere in the twenty third number is an optimistic reversal of the situations in the translation from Schiller's Cabal and Love, which ran through numbers twenty and twenty one. In Cabal and Love an old man and his daughter are brought to ruin in a corrupt society. After an essay on love and charity in number twenty two Drake presented a picture of an old man and his daughter living in glowing happiness in a charming cottage above an English lake. This is clearly a scheme which the H and S author has accepted. It is significant that this early in the decade an English writer is shrinking from the tragic implications of a German play and substituting a sketch of sugary content in which a benign nature smiles upon unthreatened harmony. Drake's response to Schiller is to update an Idyl of Gessner. It should be remembered that Gessner was still featuring in English magazines at this time and that his Idyls were to be republished in Edinburgh in 1798 and be reprinted several times, in consequence, in The Monthly Mirror.

Despite the way in which Nathan Drake is allowed to negate the original German austerity of vision, the H and S writer does manage in five of The Speculator's numbers to give a reasonably comprehensive introduction to contemporary German writers. This completely overshadows Mackenzie's achievement. Mackenzie knew only French versions of the texts he mentions. The H and S author's actual translations: an act of Clavigo and an act of Cabal and Love, are more sensitive than any of the other versions of those plays which appeared in the next ten years. From this informed and sensitive base he went on to produce some resounding generalisations and some highly significant conclusions as to what exactly the German originals meant for European literature in general and for English literature in particular.

The introductory number gives the clearest picture of the H and S writer's nature and viewpoints; it is verbose and bland. He declares his aim 'to set in motion the more amiable workings of the human breast', and 'by softening the heart to open the way to those impressions which adorn and dignify our nature,'[1] so the bias is clearly to be towards the sentimental and the optimistic and not towards the more challenging,violent aspects of German writing. In fact he states that 'sketches of their more elegant literature will be attempted'. The concluding remark that, 'if in these papers, a single note be given to virtue, or the form of knowledge rendered more attractive', the writer 'will have received a reward in which his labours are overpaid,'[2] makes it unlikely from the start that any episode of Karl Moor's adventures will be translated. Clearly H and S was in a harmony of intentions with the equally optimistic and morally pretentious Nathan Drake.

This is not a small point. Throughout the period of interest in German literature there seems to have been in England a moral consensus of high

1. The Speculator (London, 1790) p.14.
2. Ibid. p.14.

minded, not to say canting and hypocritical, escapism which censored all those German works which explored the violent side of human nature. The authors of The Speculator were part of that consensus. Tears were acceptable, but not blood.

The fifth number is the first to begin the exploration of German writing, and its pace is as deliberate as was the introduction's. Considerable space is devoted to spiteful remarks about French literature, then follows a vague account of the earliest reaches of German writing. This could easily have been taken from Friedel and De Bonneville's Nouveau Théâtre Allemand (1782-1785) as the writer seems to have no personal knowledge of the German Minnesingers. By the end of the number the reader has only gathered a few generalised epithets for more recent writers: 'the sublimity and varied measure' of Klopstock, Gessner's 'harmonious softness'[1]. Wieland's Musarion and Oberon are mentioned for their 'musical softness and elegance.'[2] Haller is described as 'venerable', Lessing and Schiller are bracketted together with 'deep pathos', and Goethe has 'fiery enthusiasm'. The only individual work mentioned at any length is Goethe's Sorrows of Werter which needed no introduction in England. The only interesting point in the whole disappointing number is the stress on the fact that Germany first impressed itself on Europe by its music. H and S speaks of 'the fiery wildness of an Haydn'[3] which suggests that England saw the music of that composer as being in an emotional mood parallel to Goethe's writings; a point not easily appreciated from this distance in time.

In the sixth number H and S at last tries to define what makes contemporary German tragic drama significant and new. His approach is at

1. Ibid p.57.
2. Ibid p.58.
3. Ibid p.56.

first nervous and sometimes devious, but finally intensely suasive. Much time is spent attacking the artificial polish of French drama; then much stress is laid on the German's acknowledged debt to Shakespeare. Both English and German poets are rebuked for having 'too little regard for subordinate and assistant beauties'[1]; Schiller's last productions are praised because they show 'that the German tragedy may have its wildness and irregularity polished down, without sacrificing its essential excellencies'[2]. But after all these conventional reservations the H and S writer's praise is lavishly expressed.

First he insists on realism as opposed to art:

> to convey the struggles of glowing passions in the strong language of the heart; to melt with pity, to shake with terror; to be great, sublime, affecting, is a province where nature rules alone.[3]

This statement accounts for the direct diction and freshness of the same writer's translations from Goethe and Schiller. He sees the French stage as dominated by 'exquisite refinement', clearly a quality which he admires; yet what he prefers, against his cultural conditioning, is the German stage:

> often full of the grossest truths, and violating every rule, their tragedy moves the soul, seizes the attention, wakes vivid curiosity, terror and pity; the master strings of the human soul are touched in every scene, and though often with too rude a hand, the feelings acknowledge the influence.[4]

What is impressive about this writing is that reason is being rejected

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.76.
2. Ibid p.72.
3. Ibid p.74.
4. Ibid p.74.

for emotion by a writer who clearly has much natural sympathy for reason. Yet here he is calling for a new approach to the writing of drama and a new kind of audience reaction to it:

> The breast must be moved, agitated, torn; the author must cease to speak, to exist; his soul must be transfused into the fictious personages of his drama; the delusion must be perfect, and a new creation rising before our eyes claim all our interest and sympathy; melt the heart with the softness of passion, or shake the soul with grateful terrors.[1]

This is a strong language, but the writer justifies these extreme statements by suggesting that the German writing is, after all, only a wilder version of the native Shakespeare: 'the Englishman has generally turned with disgust or inattention from the polished artifice and laboured declamation of the French theatre, to feast with double rapture on nature and passion in the pages of his own Shakespeare.'[2] What is most significant, however, is that, though the plays which would best exemplify these 'grateful terrors', Goethe's Goetz and Schiller's Die Räuber, are mentioned later in The Speculator, no translations of them are offered. The translations which are chosen avoid physical violence and concentrate on the emotional deaths of young girls. The next number of the magazine, the eighth, contains the only poem by the H and S writer: nine pages of heroic couplets in which a young girl bemoans her sexual betrayal and ruin:

> Go, triumph o'er a heart by love betrayed
> And crush to dust a father's reverend head;
> Go, while th y crime unpunished Heaven allows,
> Laugh truth to scorn, and mock thy broken vows;

1 The Speculator (London, 1790), p.75.
2. Ibid p.70.

And, while my breast remorse and anguish tear,
To that false bosom strain some happier fair,
Who, while her flushing cheek with rapture glows,
Enjoys my tortures and insults my woes.[1]

Though the H and S translations are sensitive and generally free from cliché, this S poem is completely conventional in vocabulary and versification. The theme of the poem is so close to Nathan Drake's 'Maria of Ruysdale' story in numbers fifteen and sixteen that it is tempting to suggest that Drake also wrote this poem, but the letter S is clearly set after it, as it is after the Cabal and Love translation. Drake and his co-author both seem to have had a partiality for the misery of young girls.

The trite diction of this 'Epistle' by a deserted woman' is particularly disappointing as the main theme of the next essay, number nine, by H is the importance of direct simplicity. He writes of the need for 'a language short, simple, and abrupt, or silence more eloquent than words, to paint the workings of the human heart'[2] and quotes Macduff's 'He has no children' approvingly. But the chapter spends far more time on the excellence of Euripides and Sophocles and the 'high propriety and exact decorum to polished versification' of French tragedies than it does on specific German examples. Even when the German approach to dramatic writing is being praised, the sentences contrive to suggest gentlemanly distate:

> The comparative roughness of the German manners, is not without its advantages in preserving the energetic distinctions of character, and communicating a certain prominence of feature, which, though sometimes liable to degenerate into harshness, contributes highly to dramatic effect and interest.[3]

1. The Speculator (London, 1790) p. 98.
2. Ibid p.94. misprint for p.104.
3. Ibid, p.110.

When a comparison is made between 'The German' and 'those romantic landscapes in which the spirit of Rosa delighted', there is still a note of complaint that the plays are 'liable to degenerate into savageness too uncultivated'[1]

At the end of this essay there are suggestions that the original plan for The Speculator was more ambitious than what was actually published. A selection from Goethe, Schiller and Lessing is promised but the book includes no translation from Lessing. Other German dramatists are mentioned: 'Leisewitz, Julius von Tarent, Unzer, Klinger and Garstenberg.' The last two found no place in Nouveau Théâtre Allemand so the H and S writer was not confined to the French collection like most of his British contemporaries, but had read widely at his own choosing. The chapter ends with praise for Klopstock's dramatic poems on the death of Adam and the death of Herman, but not even scraps of translation from these are offered, though earlier the Greeks had been given good measure.

As an introduction to Goethe the thirteenth chapterof The Speculator is not impressive. The writer notes Goethe's gift for tender writing where 'the softer strings of the heart acknowledge an influence',[2] but does not dwell on it. Goetz von Berlichingen's 'plot is irregularity itself, and complicated with circumstances which render it hardly capable of being brought on the stage'[3]. Stella is 'a very singular play' but the H writer chooses to concentrate on Clavigo, only to give a careful précis of its plot in preparation for the translation of the last scene.

As an attempt to consider the whole nature of Schiller's writing the nineteenth number (the last by H) is much more rewarding than the thirteenth's vague notes on Goethe. Both these accounts will be considered in detail

1 The Speculator (London, 1790), p.112.
2. Ibid. p.152.
3. Ibid.

within the respective chapters on Goethe and Schiller. What should be noticed is that this ninth number of The Speculator was to prove a veritable mine of ready made critical responses when full length translations of Schiller's plays began to appear and the uncertain review writers were at loss what line to take with this revolutionary prodigy. If you wrote, as the H writer does, that Schiller was 'the Aeschylus of the German drama'[1], you had made a safe classical point and put the German into some kind of neat pigeon hole. William Taylor made use of just this generalisation.[2]

The H writer's conclusions on Schiller are not objective but they are of a piece with his earlier generalisations on German writing. Schiller has power and the power is upsetting: 'the fire and energy is liable to be overstrained, and not unfrequently produces images, too near the brink of horror and disgust to operate the effects of pleasure and admiration'. Even though he had spent a chapter on the superiority of Shakespeare's and Euripides's direct simplicity of diction, the H writer retreated from the modern German attempt at the same kind of writing:

> .....expression is often rendered harsh, and metaphor carried to obscurity; while,in the more forcible painting of passion, a roughness is apt to interweave itself, against which the polish of modern manners may revolt as coarse and indelicate.[3]

This is a perfect expression of that fastidiousness, that clinging to polished phrases, which seemed, through the next ten years, always to excuse the English from any full blooded imitations of the most exciting German translated

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.238.
2. Monthly Review, XVII (1795), p,310: 'like Aeschylus distinguished by his daring energy'.
3. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.241.

writing. Kotzebue's bold moral situations were popular because they were expressed in drawing room terms and in salon situations. Schiller may have imitated Shakespeare but Shakespeare was a long time ago and, moreover, a national institution; Schiller was bloody, bold and contemporary; the fascinated distaste which the H writer expresses for his works was to be echoed again and again throughout the decade.

As usual the response to Lessing is mysterious, he is 'an exception to the general wildness and irregularity of structure in the German drama, and proved that chastity of composition and adherence to rule are not incompatible with the spirit of the tragedy of his country.'[1] Yet no example of his work is offered. The H writer was not a shrewd analyst of his own reactions and it is probable that Lessing's plays were not disgustingly irregular enough to arouse his delighted horror.

Contradictory as is this critical response, the translation of Act Five of Cabal and Love reads excellently. It flows freely, it is relatively unmannered and a pathetic poetry works around the tempestuous incident. The fresh simplicity of the diction and the poetic lilt of the sentences in this earliest of all English translations of the play compares favourably with Boosey's version of 1795[2] and M.G. Lewis's of 1797. The Speculator's version of old Miller's speech at the end of Act Five, Scene one runs:

> Where thou will'st, Louisa, the bread of our God will no where fail us; nor will he suffer ears to be wanting to my fiddle. Yes! let the worst come - I will set to music the story of thy misfortunes; I will sing a ballad of the daughter, who, to honour a father rent her own heart assunder. As we beg with our song from door to door, sweet will be the relish of the alms we gain from their hands who weep at our tale.[3]

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.241.
2. Boosey was the publisher. Taylor, Historic Survey, iii, 178 names Peter Columbine as the translator. The Germans favour J.J.K. Timaus.
3. Speculator, p.260.

The 1795 version of this speech is much compressed:

> Let this mark of elasticity of mind be stamped on the annals of Truth. To each parent I turn to attest this bright deed, as now instanced in my heaven born child.[1]

Not only is this wooden in rhythm but it barely makes construable English sense. Lewis's 1797 translation is more literal but less poetic in flow:

> Go whither thou wilt, my Julia, thy mother and I will follow thee. Bread is to be found everywhere, and upon my harp must we depend for sustenance. Here, let everything go to ruin; let my house fall; let my goods moulder away. While I wander with thee, my child, I will not remember home. While I lean my old head on thy bosom I shall wish for no other resting place. Thy hand shall guide us from village to village, and thy voice shall accompany the tones of my instrument. I will compose a song of thy sufferings: thou shalt sing of the daughter, who rent her own heart to preserve her father's from breaking. We will beg with the ballad from door to door, and sweet will be the alms of those who weep at the relation of thy sorrows.[2]

There is no apparent reason why a translation of 1790 should be superior to those of a few years later; but an exactly parallel situation occurred with Taylor's 1790 translation of Bürger's Lenora, which was markedly superior to the rival translations of the same poem in 1796. It seems from these pointers that British translators were failing to grasp the fact that contemporary German writing suggested an escape from a stale and mannered literary style. Only the wildness and the melodrama are being noted, the directness of the language, which could have been the true German innovation, is being missed. Even the H

1. F. Schiller, Cabal and Love (London, 1795), p.98 published by T. Boosey.
2. M.G. Lewis, The Minister (London, 1797), p.179.

and S translator fails to apply his unaffected translation style to his own original poem. His failure emphasises the importance of Wordsworth's combined example and theory of poetic diction in his writing of the Lyrical Ballads. Unfortunately even Wordsworth, when he wrote for the stage in The Borderers, was unable to break from the compelling hold of Shakespearian blank verse rhythms, so to that extent The Speculator was written in vain.

Certainly one weakness of The Speculator, since it was attempting to influence British writing in a German direction, was its failure to provide examples of how new English drama in either prose or verse might be written to profit from Goethe's tenderness or Schiller's direct passion. It is easy to dismiss Nathan Drake's contributions to the magazine-book because, on a purely literary level, they are banal and ridiculous, yet they are an uncanny prophecy of just those aspects of German literature which were to find favour in the coming decade. But then they are, also, reflections of the kind of brief Gothick tales which were often found in magazines like The Lady in the 1780s, foretastes also of those poems which Southey and many others were to produce in the 1790s, with their indulgence in suffering, reflective sympathy and responsibility.

Drake's numbers for The Speculator include three tales of sentiment and one of Gothick horror. These emphasise the derivative continuity of English writing by their foreshadowing of Wordsworth, Austen and even Keats. Though all four stories are intended to relate to the H and S author's theorising only one has an actual German theme. Number two of the magazine is about Wolkmar and his dog, but its central concern is the suffering of an old man and a young deserted woman. In all three of the sentimental tales Drake is fascinated by old men, dwelling on their appearance and costume at length. This first story has a thinly delineated Alpine setting. An aged man, Gothre is tottering alone in the mountains at sunset. Wolkmar's dog bounds too eagerly to greet him and, in effect, kills him by its

enthusiasm, Drake has little sense of humour. Before he dies Gothre recognises in Wolkmar his long lost son. Later in the same night Wolkmar also discovers his long lost wife and son, Fanny and Billy,'"Let us kneel", said Wolkmar, "round the body of aged Gothre"; they knelt around, the moon shone sweetly on the earth, and the spirit of Gothre passed by, he saw his children and was happy.'[1]

This is poor stuff, but what is interesting about it is the possibility that it is a conscious but optimistic version of the ending of Schiller's Die Räuber, the same kind of twist that Drake later gives to Cabal and Love with his account of an idyll by Grassmere. Wordsworth, for no obvious biographical reason, was obsessed from the time of his Gothic Fragment, 1796, through The Borderers, 1797, Salisbury Plain 1791-1794 and the Lyrical Ballads, 1798 and many later poems, with the theme of an old man ruined by time and society and placed amidst indifferent natural beauty.

Remembering this, Drake's third sentimental tale is curiously prescient. The writer is making an excursion in the Lake District among 'scenes whose exquisite beauty and softness, whose charm of contrast and calm sweetness of expression, suggested the delightful but, too often, visionary ideas of rural happiness and elegant simplicity'[2]. It is evening beside Grasmere:

> I sat myself down upon the roots of an old tree near the edge of the lake, and was listening to the distant murmur of some water falls, when suddenly the sound of village bells diverted my attention; no, never shall I forget their sweet and dying cadence, how softly they stole along the lake, now bursting loud and louder on the ear, and now faintly sinking to repose: they were in unison with the scene around and with my feelings - no, never shall I forget them.
>
> .....whenever I have heard

1. The Speculator (London 1790), p.26.
2. Ibid. p.307.

A kindred melody, the scene recurs
And with it all its pleasures.....[1]

The likeness to Wordworth's An Evening Walk, published in 1793 but written 1787-89, is remarkable, even to the brief flow of the verse, though Drake's is closer to a much later Wordsworthian manner than to

Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedgerows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottag'd grounds.[2]

Even in his peopling of the scene Drake looks forward to a later Wordsworth.

Next day the writer comes upon a cottage in the woods above the lake and is entertained there, with exactly Gessner's lack of narrative line and with his sacharine simplicity, by a young woman and her father, a retired officer:

'a man of very interesting figure, and rather stricken in years, and who, after looking around him with an air of satisfaction, smiled with ineffable sweetness on his fair companion, and gave, with cheerful piety, to heaven his grateful thanks.[3]

There is no Sturm and Drang, no poisoned lemonade and grief, only a glass of wine and a cheerful parting. The writing is remarkable for the aesthetic appreciation of the old man:

dressed in a scarlet coat, which seemed to have been formerly a uniform, his countenance was strongly marked martial, but at the same time mingled with much benignity; his forehead was bold and open, his eye

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.309.
2. William Wordsworth, An Evening Walk, lines 9-11 from the Quarto of 1793.
3. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.311.

> full and dark, his eye brows black and thick, his nose aquiline, and his chin rather prominent; he had a staff in his right hand, and although apparently possessing some vigour and in health, he walked with difficulty, being,as I perceived, lame of one leg.[1]

It is hard to trace any causal link between the piece of writing and an introduction to German literature, but it is there in the same book as the translations from Goethe and Schiller, almost as if it is the instinctive answer of an English connoisseur of the picturesque to the violent glooms of sexual passion in a foreign land: a retreat to pure sentiment on a lovely hillside. But Gessner's writings have exactly the same theme though set in an imprecise Arcady.

Drake's second story of Maria of Ruysdale is also set in the north of England, but it is conventionally lachrymose, a plot for a Southey poem and one exactly parodied by Jane Austen in Northanger Abbey, (written though not published in 1799).

Maria is the lovely innocent daughter of Frederick Arnold, an old curate. She is seduced by Henry, the Squire's son. The Squire has Henry removed to Dover and then makes Maria, now pregnant, walk home ten miles without a chaise. She miscarries and dies, Henry returns only to attend her funeral. Perhaps the most interesting point in the story is its nearness to the plot of Taylor of Norwich's 'The Lass of Fair Wone'. That poem was a translation of Bürger's ballad Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain. Taylor's poem was not printed until it appeared in the April 1796 number of the Monthly Magazine. It is not known when Taylor first wrote the poem but his 'Lenora' which was first printed in the same magazine in March 1796 had been in existence since 1790. Possibly 'The Lass of Fair Wone' also dated back to 1790 and Nathan Drake had heard it read aloud, but it is much

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.312.

more likely that the H and S author had told him the story and his Maria of Ruysdale is a reaction to that account. The one striking difference between the Bürger plot and Drake's English version of it is the way in which Drake mellows the character of the suffering girl's clergyman father. In Bürger he is unforgiving and harsh; Drake makes him mild, Christian and even physically attractive:

> through the garden window the sun broke in,and shone full upon the features of Arnold, his countenance was pale, languid, but remarkably interesting, and received a peculiar degree of expression from the tint of the morning light, and his hair, which had early become white, was scattered in thin portions over his temples and forehead. I stood impressed with awe, my soul was filled with compassion, and I wished to indulge my sorrow.....[1]

There is at least a hint, in this, of Wordsworth's feeling for the old leech gatherer. Once again the source of this appreciation for an old man in the extremity of trouble is possibly the old Count Moor from Die Räuber. It was the episode in that play when old Moor is rescued from the tower which particularly thrilled Coleridge with fascinated horror. While these foreshadowings of Wordsworthian themes and settings in no way prove that Wordsworth had read The Speculator, they certainly suggest the shaping influences of the literary decade in which he first published.

Drake's fourth piece of fictional writing in The Speculator was his longest, filling three whole numbers of the original magazine. This was Sir Gawen. It is tempting to ignore it because it is crudely overwritten, but it is an integral part of the book's theme structure and suggests the

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.198-199.

tastes of the German enthusiasts of the time. It is a work akin, by its unsubtle horrors, to Richard Hole's Arthur or the Northern Enchantment, 1789, John Aikin's 'Sir Bertrand,' of 1773, and Frank Sayer's Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology. In its attempt to suggest authentic ancientry: 'the following singular adventure is still extant among the family writings, and is still recorded by his posterity'[1], it suggests Horace Walpole, and it carries a theme from Percy's Reliques that Keats reused in 'La Belle Dame sans Merci.'

The story describes how Gawen, lost in a dark wood, entrusted himself to an ugly old hag. She guided him to a haunted castle where he fell down a hole into a sinister cave occupied by a gigantic skeleton. Here he hears screams and groans, sees mangled bodies and a corpse roasting on a fire. Nothing is explained, the horrors are included for their own sake. The knight faints. When he wakes he is in a beautiful forest where fairies dance with noble knights. These disappear, like the fairies in the Wife of Bath's tale, when Gawen steps forward. The Queen of the Fays squeezes a magic juice upon his eyes and he wakes to the safety of the ordinary morning world. Was it a dream?

The crudity of this kind of writing is its strength. It takes on the nature of planchette writing. Nothing is too impossible to be set down; the stream of consciousness can flow. Themes for the poems of tomorrow are being hoarded up; Christabel takes off from the same level. Again it is not unreasonable to suggest that The Speculator's serious critical essays, with their message that the new drama is uninhibited and unrestrained, are creating a critical respectability for vital nonsense of the 'Gawen' kind. In the essay No. 9 immediately before 'Gawen,' author H scorns French dramatic restraint because by it, "the more terrible struggles which lay waste and

1. The Speculator, p.119.

desolate the human breast are kept back".

> "The German drama, more daring, aims commonly at the expression and imitation of the higher fiercer emotions. Never fearful like the French of being too tragic, the strongest delineations of passion, the most daring images, and unusual combinations are hazarded".[1]

All this the Gawen writing promptly exemplifies and, by condensing the incidents of an early Gothic novel like William Hutchinson's The Hermitage (York, 1772) or Clara Reeve's The Champion of Virtue (London, 1785), makes them wholly ridiculous.

This was to remain a favourite line for Nathan Drake. His Literary Hours, 1798[2], and Noontide Leisure, 1824 are full of such stories. Strangers groan on graves at twilight in a ruined abbey, women shriek. A man tells, with no apology to Home's Douglas, how he murdered his wife's brother, thinking he was her lover. Tales like this are jumbled up with accounts of Karl Moor watching the sunset on the bank of the Danube and snatches of Ossian: the Dar Thula section where Nathos is driven by storm onto the coast of Ulster where Cairbar his enemy lives. This was the kind of literature which Drake enjoyed, and apparently he found readers for it, so Drake is as good an example as can be found of the kind of writer who created the German 'mania' of the 1790s. His taste and his enthusiasm go some way to explaining why this early German period was hectic and shortlived.

The Speculator was praised, with moderation, in The Hibernian Magazine, in The Analytical Review for April 1791 and The Monthly Review for February 1792, so it was not ignored, but nothing else like it was attempted in the 1790's. It is some comment on the decade that The Speculator's most popular passage was an ancedote of a respectable pauper of Paris who asked for more than his

1. The Speculator [illegible], p.110.
2. An expanded 2nd edition 'corrected and greatly enlarged' came out in 1800.

daily dole of bread. The curé who came to question his extra demand was told that it was for his dog, so he ordered the pauper to dispose of his dog, whereupon:

> 'Ah sir', exclaimed the poor man weeping, 'and if I should lose my dog, who is there to love me?' The good pastor, melting into tears, took his purse and giving it to him, 'take this, sir', said he; 'this is mine - This I can give.'[1]

This was repeated almost word for word in The Analytical Review in 1791, and The Morning Chronicle in 1796 (on April the first). Lastly it was picked up and re-used by Coleridge in No. 5 of The Watchman in 1796. He cut out the happy ending.

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1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.302.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Literary reputation of Goethe in England in the last decade of the 18th century

It is at this point that the advantage appears of approaching the topic purely through the translations, as they were printed and in the sequence that they were printed. To anyone with a knowledge of German the relative standing in England in 1800 of Goethe, Schiller and Kotzebue is an incomprehensible phenomenon. But approached from the standpoint of a literate, non-German speaking Englishman, who was thirty in 1790 and followed the fortunes of the three authors through the decade, the situation in 1800 will make sense.

In 1800, to the English, Goethe was a sensational one-book novelist whose plays were a bad joke and wholly unacted. Schiller's plays were almost as unpresented on the stage, but they had a great repute as closet drama of disturbing brilliance. Kotzebue was the towering figure of the three. Hailed as 'the German Shakespeare' (a title tentatively awarded to Schiller earlier in the decade) Kotzebue's plays were regularly translated for closet reading, often in rival versions, and three of his plays had proved enormously profitable in the London public theatres. These were to remain popular for many years despite the anti-German feeling current in the first years of the new century.

The English response to German literature in the nineties has become remote and difficult to empathise with since Carlyle took over the advocacy of German writing. Even in 1810 Coleridge would probably have found his own attitudes of the earlier decade alien. His study of German aesthetics and philosophy had carried him a long way from his raw but creative responses to translated German works of the 'mania' period.

There is an unresolved and unresolvable critical issue here. What

is the value of ideas as opposed to memorable 'creative' reactions? How does a complete understanding of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason weigh against the writing of one 'Ancient Mariner?' Before he became fluent in German, Coleridge used translations of Bürger and his own construing of Wieland's Oberon as inspirations for his best known poems: the 'Mariner' and 'Christabel.' After he returned from Göttingen there was the careful translation of Wallenstein and then little but the flow of abstract ideas, the half acknowledged manipulation of other people's thinking. In 1805 Coleridge wrote 'Leibnitz, Lessing, Voss, Kant shall be Germany to me',[1] and he ranks them against Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Bacon, Harrington and Wordsworth as the representative English giants. These be thy gods O Israel; apart perhaps from Lessing he cannot have owed a line of poetry or a bright image to any of the four German champions.

In the most recent work on the period, Rosemary Ashton's The German Idea, the author never notices how barren of poetry is 19th century England's growing familiarity with German 'thought'. It seems to be the crude initial impact of German ideas and style which is fruitful, rather than the scholarly and accurate version or the subtle exegesis of a philosophical point. Coleridge's Wallenstein is an illustration of this. It received a chilly response from the critics and the booksellers, and Mrs Ashton blames the time, 1800. 'German Literature generally now lost its readers, for it seemed vaguely synonymous with 'Jacobinism' or any political and moral radicalism, and also with literary bad taste. Not only Schiller's play (Die Räuber) but Goethe's early works, Kotzebue's hitherto popular domestic dramas and even Bürger's British inspired ballads lost favour by the association.'[2] This is only partly correct: Goethe's early works,

1. Coleridge, Notebooks, II, p.2598.
2. Rosemary Ashton, The German Idea (Cambridge, 1980), p.30.

Werter excepted, never had favour, Bürger's ballads were superseded by able native imitations[1] and Kotzebue's The Stranger and Lover's Vows continued in high favour. Wallenstein failed because it is accurate and little else. Mrs Ashton writes: 'the translation is very good indeed ... excellent blank verse ... catches the mood and situation precisely'[2], but the first lines of the speech which she quotes to illustrate its quality are, as dramatic poetry, almost impenetrable:

> Is't so? I can no longer what I would?
> No longer draw back at my liking? I
> Must do the deed, because I thought of it,
> And fed this heart here with a dream? Because
> I did not scowl temptation from my presence,
> Dallied with thoughts of possible fulfilment,
> Commenced no movement, left all time uncertain,
> And only kept the road, the access open?[3]

It depends for comprehension on italicised words and the unexpected signalling of question marks. Nothing lightens it. It has none of the intoxicating rhetoric and readability of Tytler's sturdy prose version of The Robbers 1792. No one would break off 'shaking like an aspen leaf' after reading Wallenstein in the middle of the night, or respond to it with a sonnet as Coleridge himself had to Tytler's Robbers in 1794.

If it is difficult to assess the value to Coleridge of his increased knowledge of German, then it is no easier to decide how closely an English poet needed to study Goethe's Faust to benefit by it. The most rewarding English reaction to Faust is Byron's Manfred, and that play is only an echo, the result of a few nights of animated oral translation by 'Monk' Lewis at the villa on Lake Geneva. Would a year at Göttingen have done more? It is the first impression in Anglo German inter-action which matters,

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1. There was still an enthusiastic review of them in The Monthly Mirror, IX (1800), p.216.
2. Ashton, The German Idea, p.34.
3. Coleridge, Wallenstein (London, 1800), p.155

whether Ossian for them or The Robbers for us. Translations need basic affinities and rough treatment. Quixote has never been truly translated; Gargantua has. Often with translations in this decade it is the versions which succeed; the careful renderings are barely noticed.

Magazines of this time provide an easy way to fill out an account of literary movements, but selections from them can easily become a concealed form of the subjective. Periodicals like The Critical Review, The Monthly Review, The Analytical Review and The Dramatic Censor are strewn with references to the progress of German literature and these are often highly coloured and quotable, but they can be made to support virtually any view of the British response to the Germans. Even the usual generalisation, based on selections from the Anti-Jacobin and The British Critic, that German works peaked in popularity around 1798-1799 and then fell into disfavour, is unhelpful. Kotzebue's fall from 119 editions in the 1791-1800 decade to 77 editions in the 1801-1810 decade is not a dramatic collapse; while Goethe editions actually rose from 16 editions to 21 in the same two periods and only Schiller fell significantly from 35 to 12.[1]

To impose some discipline on the approach to a movement in literature, where much of the criticism and review is shallow and derivative, it will be profitable to ask certain precise questions. The first two questions are:-

1. Why did Goethe's work become overshadowed in this decade?
2. Why were Schiller's plays frequently published but never produced on the public stage?

These two questions demand a third:

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1. B.Q. Morgan, A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation (Stanford and London, 1938), p.15-16).

3. Why was Kotzebue a more significant writer for England in this decade than either Goethe or Schiller?

which must particularise into yet two more:-

4. Which plays of Kotzebue's considerable oeuvre were truly 'popular' rather than simply published?

5. Were these 'popular' plays uniform in their appeal or were some reviewed as 'Jacobin', others as 'Anti-Jacobin'?

The first of the questions: that concerning the overshadowing of Goethe has been answered in part, and indirectly, in the last three chapters. English literary criticism in the last half of the 18th century was not overburdened with scholarship, prescience, impartiality or taste. Neither Fuseli, Holcroftnor Mackenzie made much effort to direct readers or audiences towards Goethe. The result was that his writings were translated slowly and in a maladroit order. His accessible dramas must have appeared inferior or irrelevant to English readers. Five of his plays appeared before 1800 in English versions: The Sister 1792 (two versions), Iphigenia in Tauris 1793, Stella 1798, Clavigo 1798 and Goetz of Berlichingen 1799 (two versions).

There is an overriding reason why neither Fuseli, Holcroft,nor Mackenzie spent much ink on Goethe. Above the motivation of jealousy or bad taste, Goethe had already, by 1790, so formidable and dangerous a reputation that he was creating his own isolation in England. Though Die Leiden des jungen Werthers is a novel, it is the key to the fortune of Goethe's dramatic works in the nineties.

The Sorrows of Werter was published in London in an anonymous translation by 1779.[1] It was secondhand in the sense that it was not a direct translation

1. It was often attributed to Daniel Malthus, but this was denied by his son in a letter to The Gentleman's Magazine, LXX, (1800), p.177. B.Q. Morgan attributes the translation to R. Graves.

from the German but from Aubry's Les passions du jeune Werther.[1] It may well be the only work of Goethe, right up to the present day, which is a moving masterpiece in its English version. Such a judgement is impossible to prove, but an overstatement is necessary as reviews of translations are often the grudging production of spiteful pedants.[2] Whatever the objective judgements may be, Werter went through an astonishing twenty six editions between 1779 and 1800 and was translated three times. In 1786 it produced a mirror image of itself, Sir W.James's 'Letters of Charlotte', and it was turned into a play by F. Reynolds, Werter a Tragedy, (Dublin, 1786) 'as performed at the Theatre Royal Bath, Bristol, Covent Garden and Dublin'. Both these last paid the original the compliment of trying to reverse its basic mood of sympathy with Love-Death. Werter created a fashion in gloves which even the unworldly Blake noticed, and magazines frequently featured poems on the Werter theme. It trailed a legend. Reference has been made to the tale in Maty's New Review, 1783, of how Captain von Arenswald committed suicide out of 'tedium vitae', 'and the reading The sorrows of Werther', but the standard reference in magazines of the period was to the daughter of a Chester dancing instructor who was found dead with Werter under her pillow.[3] The link between the book and the incident is as automatic as the connection became between The Robbers and the revolt of aristocratic youth in Fribourg; English reviewers do not seem able to mention the one without the other. This needs to be stressed because it is often stated that German literature fell into discredit as a moral, Jacobinical and atheistic, somewhere

1. Manheim, 1777.
2. The Monthly Review New Series, XV (1794), p.21, calls it 'feeble and defective'. Long in JEGP, XIV. (1915), p.177, wrote, 'th ough much of the form and spirit of the original is lost ... the work, on the whole is to be commended.'
3. The Gentleman's Magazine, LIV (1784), p.876.

around 1798 after a period of popularity. In fact after Werter's publication in 1779 German literature remained firmly associated with dangerous forbidden things. This was the essence of its attraction to a literary public so confident of its own values and of the stability of its protestant democracy that it felt able to indulge itself freely in imaginative flights of love-death and, a little later, Gothic necromancy and the forgiveness of adultery. Goethe and Werter are central to the alluring impropriety of things German. Up to 1779 Germany meant Gessner and tender pastoral idylls to the average English reader; after 1779, while Gessner was far from eclipsed, the book to read was Werter, it was as famous as anything by Sterne. Sterne never produced a fashion in millinery.

Translations, particularly anonymous ones, are hard to rank in the literature of a language but the 1779 Werter could well stand among the ten best English novels of the 18th century. Basically it is an exercise in self indulgence and therefore self exploration. This is why it was rightly seen as dangerous but attractive to a society which rested upon disciplined conventions. Werter is religiously rather than sexually innovative. Clarissa Harlowe ties love and death closely together but winds around them a morality of sin and guilt. Clarissa does not technically seek her own death, she expires because intercourse was achieved; Werter inflicts his because intercourse was not achieved. The suggestion left after reading Werter is that Charlotte was the sinner. That was why The Letters of Charlotte had to be written, to cover up her cruelty with windy religiosity: 'Sure 'tis a fearful, a tremendous act precipitately to rush before the awful throne of God!... to see an unsummoned spirit pass the everlasting portals of the heavens, and, unprotected, stand before the grand tribunal!'[1]

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1. Sir W. James Letters of Charlotte (London, 1786), p.169.

Only Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling bears comparison with Werter; it has the same self indulgence and a far more systematic approach to self exploration. Werter attracted infinitely more disapproval because it was so much more seductive. It is an enormously likeable novel: economical and instant in its effects, totally acceptable and popular by its brevity, intensely lyrical in its handling of incident, yet so homely and direct in its detail as to be easily identified with. Where The Man of Feeling pinches dogs surreptitiously and associates with prostitutes, Werter plays happily with children and seeks blameless contact with natural beauty. Werter does everything virtuous and fashionable: he loves children, he delights in wild nature, sympathises with old people and the distressed and is sexually pure. But all this compounds the religious danger of the book because then, having achieved the reader's near total identification with the hero, Goethe casts it all away in suicide.

The linking of cool, humorous sophistication with unpretentious simplicity is irresistible (and in the best sense neo-classical). He mocks the young Mr V who 'had read all the first part of Sultzer's Theory and was in possession of a manuscript of De Heyne's on The Study of the Antique. I forgave him all this'[1] yet he is wholly vulnerable to the glimpse of Charlotte 'in a plain white gown with pink ribbands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices of bread and butter.'[2] Even though it is a French stage removed from the original, the 1779 translation has freshness and novelty of style. That image of the white dress flutters poetically through Volume One. In his despair at the end he sees 'her white gown waving near the garden gate. I stretched out

1. Goethe, The Sorrows of Werter, 2 vols. (London, 1779), i, 12.
2. Ibid, p.27.

my arms and she disappeared under the shade of the lime trees'[1]. The image of the pistols is built subtly from the earliest pages to the awful complicity of Charlotte's taking them from the wall at the end. The direct language is employed to press home statements of irreligion in the most suasive form. After he has described a captivating scene with children in the little village where Werter drinks tea, Goethe has his sentimental reader wholly relaxed, accepting and vulnerable, and then he presses home the cruel comparison: 'But that the great children-should wander upon this earth,without knowing whence they came,or whither they go; without any certain motives for their conduct,but guided,like them, by biscuits, sugar plums and rods; this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge, and yet nothing, I think, can be more evident.'[2] The book is so specific in its observed imagery: these grown up children 'dress and undress their dolls, watch with great respect before the cupboard where mama keeps the sweetmeats ... and cry for more', linking the petty with the universal in Shakespearian manner. By the end of its brief pages it has discredited Christianity, suggested a civilised humanism, cast contempt upon aristocracy and pretension of manners, and given love the final voice in morality.

The book is easy to admire; it is very much harder to decide what was its impact upon the English literary scene. Goethe rightly credited the English in part for its inspiration. He found the themes of self indulgent melancholy and suicide in Young and Warton. The sheer popularity of the book in this country indicates that it dealt with a theme which fascinated the British but which, by various national

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1. Goethe, The Sorrows of Werter, 2 vols. (London, 1779), i, p.105.
2. Ibid, i, p.15

inhibitions, their own authors were unwilling to consider.[1] But by its own absolute success it filled the gap and defied imitation. There was perhaps a disinclination among the British to treat love with direct seriousness[2]. They inclined to approach it either through the humorous whimsy of Sterne or the stylised melodrama of the Gothic. This was possibly a reflection of actual national practice and therefore a valid observation of their manners.

The sensational murder of Martha Ray, mistress of the Earl of Sandwich by the Rev. Hackman did inspire one English writer, Herbert Croft,to an extraordinary book called Love and Madness which contrives to blame Werter for the murder. In a series of letters supposed to have been exchanged between Hackman and Ray are the following:-

> 'Letter 32 To Miss - Ireland 1 July 1776.
>
> Do send me,thither,the French book you mention, Werther. If you don't,I positively never will forgive you. Nonsense,to say it will make me unhappy, or that I shan't be able to read it! Must I pistol myself,because a thick blooded German has been fool enough to set the example, or because a German novelist has feigned such a story? If you don't lend it me, I will most assuredly procure it some time ...
>
> Letter 33 To Mr - England 20 Aug. 1776
>
> The book you mentioned, is just the only book you should never read. On my knees,I beg you never, never read it! Perhaps you have read it - Perhaps - ! I am distracted.'[3]
>
> Hackman meant to shoot himself, not Miss Ray.

Love and Madness was published in 1780 (London) and went through seven editions.

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1. Jerningham, 'the wilting Corydon of Batheaston', published a poem in 1773 (London) called Faldoni and Teresa, 'founded on a very singular event that happened near Lyons in the month of June 1770'. In it two lovers make a suicide pact, take pistols from an altar and shoot themselves.
2. 'The passion of love represented on the stage, is sure to be insipid or disgusting, unless it creates smiles or tears', Mrs Inchbald, Lovers' Vows, (London, 1798), Preface.
3. Herbert Croft, Love and Madness, a story too true (London, 1780), p.73-75.

Werter came in alone. It was not introduced by prestigious figures, it simply appeared and succeeded, attracting recognition of its force and excited consternation at its revolutionary messages. It is tempting to see the mad lover gathering nosegays for a lost love as an inspiration for the frail outcasts of Wordsworth's poetry, but there are far too many romantic rejects in the magazines between 1779 and 1798 for the parallel to be impressive. What is significant is this isolation of Goethe and Werter. It indicates that the English were prepared to turn for a certain type of literary exploration to foreign sources rather than to produce a home version. German 'immorality' of the nineties may be what the English required. If immorality was foreign it did not have to be taken too seriously. French literature has often fulfilled a similar role. If Werter had been a fine and original work but ignored, the situation would have been simpler; but it was obviously admired and widely enjoyed, yet not imitated: a piece of national assimilation but not accommodation, to use Piagetian analysis. This may be a pointer to the role of Schiller in England in the nineties, even possibly to that of Kotzebue. It may be that English plays at this period were written under the control of an almost subconscious national consensus and that German drama worked in a corollary to this, permitted some licence by its alien origin.

It is a fact that no single play of Goethe's was acted on the public stage in England in the 18th century. This gives Reynolds's Werter a Tragedy a certain importance as it is at least a dramatic version of a Goethe novel and it was quite frequently performed. All the interesting features of Reynolds's play are disasters.

If there was one novel and effective feature of the 1779 translation it was the light and vivid movement of the prose, so Reynolds wrote his play in Shakesperian blank verse, and early blank verse at that. Werter talks like Hotspur:

Oh, I am grown so careless of myself,
Nor storms, nor dangers can appal me now;
Place me alone 'midst hot Arabia's sands;
Leave me unclad 'midst freezing Zembla's snow;
Find me where mortal never trod before;
And only tell me that my Charlotte loves,
And hopeless Werter shall be happier far,
Than monarchs glittering on triumphant thrones.[1]

We are back in the 18th century trap of accepted registers. The same response pattern is being followed as with the Gessner translations of the sixties and seventies. Contact with a foreign language tends to produce fresh plain English in the translation, but laboured diction or Shakesperian pastiche return when the native writer moves too far from the alien stimulus.

The characterisation and morality of Reynolds's play are as far from the original as his language. The dramatic climax when Albert and Charlotte send the pistols to Werter is cut out because it involves Charlotte in Werter's decision. The play becomes a treatise against suicide: a friend, Sebastian, could have saved Werter but he makes a fatal mistake. Instead he drags a penitent Werter in to die at guiltless Charlotte's feet: 'Give me some comfort/For I am coward all - I feared to brave/Life's common chances'.[2] Sebastian presses the point home:

For if one crime is blacker than the rest,
Below more punished, more abhorred above;
'Tis self destruction ... at mercy's throne,
The suicide alone is shut from Grace.[3]

All the serene happiness of the early letters is lost, Werter enters, already in hopeless despair. Women are left on a pinnacle of doll-like

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1. F. Reynolds, Werter A Tragedy (Dublin, 1786), p.11.
2. Ibid, p.58.
3. Ibid, p.60.

innocence, unreal and uninvolved. The dictates of Protestant Christianity are never questioned. Yet there was a place for the play in at least four theatres, a better record than Coleridge's Osorio achieved, and Reynolds's version shows just how much innovation and psychological insight the contemporary British theatre was able to absorb. Clearly, if Goethe was to become any kind of theatrical force in Britain in the nineties he would need a persuasive and particularly moral introduction. Kotzebue's The Stranger proved that a foreign play with a daring sexual theme could succeed on the London stage. Goethe's initial handicap was not sexuality but irreligiosity.

Mackenzie mentioned Goethe in his encomium of Schiller; but the first deliberate attempt to familiarise the English with Goethe's plays is found in Number XIII of The Speculator, dated Saturday, May 8th, 1790. The anonymous writer H had mentioned Goethe in two previous numbers of the bi-weekly periodical. In Number V, he had praised The Sorrows of Werter's 'exquisite passion' which had 'as a composition long excited our admiration, though apparently without awakening much curiosity for the other numerous productions of Goethe's bold and vivid pencil'.[1] So he had perceived the paradox of the novel's fame and the obscurity of the plays without realising that the one was responsible for the other. In Number VI he referred to the 'wildness and irregularity' of 'Goethe's singular tragedy of Goets von Berlichingen'[2] and its debt to Shakespeare, but supplied no specimen translation of what must, from references in Mackenzie and Baron Riesbeck, have been the least unknown in England of Goethe's plays.

Instead, as an instance of Goethe's 'turn for elevating and surprising', he translated in Number XIII the whole of the last act of Clavigo after

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.56.
2. Ibid, p.72.

a six page summary of the plot of the play. First he stressed, rather unwisely, Goethe's 'greatest excentricity in opinion, and singularity of composition', mentioned yet again the Sorrows of Werter 'the same glow of passion and beautiful simplicity, which distinguish that singular production'. After this uneasy opening H urged that, 'the softer strings of the heart acknowledge an influence in his pieces, not always connected with German tragedy. His female characters, in particular, possess a variation of feature which marks the hand of a master, and are drawn with strokes more delicate than the dramas of his country commonly present. Of this the exquisitely feminine traits of his Stella and the artlessness of youthful simplicity in the unfortunate heroine of Clavigo are striking instances'.[1]

After this introduction the choice of passage for translation was clumsy. In the last act of Clavigo the tender heroine is dead on her bier and all that the passage offers as an example of Goethe's fire and originality is some cloak and dagger stuff in a dark alley, with Clavigo claiming 'one bridal kiss' from his dead beloved as he dies himself. An English reader would find it a cynical version of Romeo and Juliet, with no more poetry than, 'when as he wantoned in the golden dream of fancy, this very street has echoed to the song and lute; while poor Maria, listening at her secret window, has felt her bosom burn with rapturous expectation'.[2]

The H and S authors of the various essays in The Speculator generalise admirably about the essential qualities of the Sturm und Drang. Yet, like most of the reviewers of the coming decade, H and S recoil in fact from what they have admired in theory: 'The stage too often streams with blood, and the representation is connected with circumstances from which the mind recoils in horror'[3]. Perhaps the most interesting omission in

1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.152.
2. Ibid, p.159-160.
3. Ibid, p.240.

this period of dalliance with foreign horror is that of any mention of the native 'sturm und drang' of Webster and Tourneur. These would have to wait until Swinburne for a revival of interest, and much later still for performance, an instance of the meagre historical scholarship of British critics. The French never forgot Corneille.

So The Speculator introduced Goethe unprepossessingly with a harsh example and too many reminders of Werter. The first full Goethe play to appear in translation was Die Geschwister. Goedeke[1] claims that Taylor of Norwich translated it. Mackenzie may have been half responsible for another translation of it in the same year, but he was not ready to put his name and influence behind it. Dramatic pieces from the German is a timid and conservative collection.[2] If it had not been published in untheatrical Edinburgh then Ayrenhoff's comedy The Set of Horses'[3] might have merited a more popular place on the London stage than Holcroft's The German Hotel.[4] The Diderot/Gessner play, Conversations of a Father was too subtle for any British theatre audience of this age, but it was eminently respectable. The Goethe play, The Sister, slight as it is, contrives to edge much closer to the improper than either of the two companion plays. It makes a comedy out of incest and does it with an almost contemptuous, self-parodying ease. So, though it is a very ably written trifle, it was, for the strategy of Goethe's developing reputation in Britain, an error.

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1. K. Goedeke, Grundiss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung, (Dresden, 1857). There is no copy of this translation in the B.M. or the Bodleian. Taylor sometimes printed in very limited editions for his friends.
2. See Chapter 3 of this study.
3. There is a confusion in this country about the author of this piece. He is always called Emdorff. A play which sounds like his, called Swop was acted once at the Haymarket, June 22, 1789, but very ill-received. It concerns a man who gives up his right to marry a girl in exchange for four horses.
4. London, 1790, a translation of J.C. Brandes' play Der Gasthof .

British readers of The Sorrows of Werter would inevitably be reminded of forbidden relationships when they found, in The Sister, a brother panting with ill-controlled lust for the sister who keeps house for him, and the sister artlessly employing the homely, effective, Goethe symbols to suggest a responding emotion:

> Mariane) "What plagu y uncivil things these brothers are! Should Fabrice,or any other good-natured lad have leave to snatch a kiss, how they would leap up to the very ceiling; and this nice gentleman here declines it,when offered!- Well, I will burn the pigeons for this."[1]

There is the usual Goethe movement from micro to macro, macro to microcosm:

> Mariane) I cannot tell you,what a confused hurry there has been in my heart. 'Tis with me, as lately at the fire in the market place; all was wrapped in a cloud of smoke, till at once it raised up the roof, and the whole house burst into flames. Leave me not, drive me not from thee, O my brother'.[2]

but it is a play which expends skill and emotion over an essentially farcical situation. It was never reprinted; it was never acted in this country.

Iphigenia in Tauris, translated into English in 1793, seems at first better calculated to restore Goethe's reputation. It was competently translated by William Taylor of Norwich: the foremost German scholar of the new decade. In fact it sank into the literary pool with barely a ripple of notice.

There are several reasons for its cool reception. It was published in Taylor's home city, Norwich,[3] not London, and, quite inexplicably, Taylor, who was usually ready to write four or five page reviews for The

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1. Dramatic Pieces from the German (Edinburgh, 1792), The Sister, p.5.
2. Ibid, p.38.
3. Robberds in his Memoir, (London, 1843), I, p.112, writes 'but only for private distribution'.

Monthly Review, supplied not a word of Preface to a work which was eminently in need of one.

Iphigenia can never have been intended by Taylor for the English stage. Goethe wrote it on the classical Greek or Racinean model. Five characters occupy the stage in a formal pattern, addressing long speeches to each other. Iphigenia opens the play with a three page speech. When Thoas renews his proposal of marriage to her it is in this flat tone:

> .....The childless man
> acquires not honour with his hoary hair.
> Today this fane I enter, where I oft
> have ask'd and thankt the heavens for victory,
> my bosom of no novel object full.
> Thou are not unacquainted with my wishes.
> To bless my people and to bless myself,
> do thou return a bride to grace my palace.[1]

after which he and Iphigenia exchange speeches for another eighteen pages before a relieving character enters. The play was highly original in its sentimental, humanist solution to the ancient pattern of a cursed and fated family. Reason triumphs, not blood, and there was a sufficient number of classically educated readers in Britain to have responded to this innovation if it had been carefully introduced. Taylor's modesty, or lack of money, blighted the publication. Whatever may have been the merit of the original's poetry Taylor's translation caught very little of it.[2] The casual punctuation of the blank verse without capitals is distracting in such a formal play and the diction is heavy with cliche: '....where in sports/and games of mutual glee the happy brothers/drew daily closer soft affections bonds,'[3] 'nor should the verdant carpet of the earth/be stalkt upon by fiends.'[4]

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1. W. Taylor, Iphigenia in Tauris (Norwich, 1793), p.18.
2. When Wordsworth declared that the lines of Lucretius describing the immolation of Iphigenia were worth the whole of Goethe's long poem, his poor command of German, suggests that he was referring to Taylor's translation rather than to the original. (even after 1799)
3. Ibid, p.6.
4. Ibid, p.36.

This is particularly disappointing since Goethe's vitality survived in both the 1779 Werter and Holcroft's Herman and Dorothea, 1801; and Taylor himself had responded magnificently to Bürger's Lenore, two or three years before he undertook this translation.

The effect of Iphigenia, in so far as it was noticed at all, was to associate Goethe not with immorality, but with tedium. This surely was the time, in 1792 or 1793, when a strong translation of Goetz would have made a mark, at least as a closet play. Taylor's choice from Goethe's current classical phase was untimely, and no other translator was interested enough to make up for Taylor's error.

As the German mania grew to its peak around 1798 it was almost inevitable that something else of Goethe's should be published in English. Perhaps it was inevitable after the success of Kotzebue's daringly emotional The Stranger, where an adulterous wife is allowed to return to her husband, and The Natural Son, where an unmarried mother is legally united to her seducer, that Benjamin Thompson should try his luck with Stella, where a wife and a mistress agree to share a husband/lover.

In retrospect it can be seen as a major disaster to the German cause. By the time it was translated in 1798 Goethe himself had come to consider the ending of the play unlikely and unsatisfactory. This is the play which Fuseli reviewed so lamely in the Analytical Review,[1] but Fuseli had only to string together a few sentences from Thompson's nervous Preface to damn the play quite adequately. 'As many beautiful, but eccentric poems of the Germans have lately become fashionable in this country', Thompson began hopefully but uneasily, 'and as we have even begun to make acquaintance with their theatre, this translation of one of the most admired plays

1. Analytical Review, XXVIII (August, 1798), p.170.

of a celebrated writer'[1], and so on. It is interesting that Thompson saw German poetry as preceding German drama in this country. Presumably he was thinking of Bürger. Tactlessly he reminded his readers of Werter and tried to cover the unlikely nature of the play's action by the even more disturbing probability that the play was based on an actual fleshly compromise, 'it has indeed been said that the whole of the fable (like that of Werter) was founded upon a more recent event in private life.'[2] Here a note of desperate farce enters into the Preface: 'the peripatia and catastrophe are nevertheless liable to great objections, and an English audience might be inclined to wish that Count Ferdinand had been left to pursue his purpose.'[3] The Count's purpose of course, was to commit suicide! Floundering on desperately, Thompson hoped that 'the beauties of passion and sentiment' should 'strike the reader blind to its defects'. Then follow the remarks on 'left hand wives' and Mirabeau's Secret History of the Court of Berlin which Fuseli copied in his review.

It would be possible to believe that Canning and Frere had paid Thompson to translate this work simply so that they could parody it. Their mockery, in The Anti-Jacobin, May 1798, of German dramatic conventions is famous and deservedly so. But it has to be said that The Rovers or The Double Arrangement did not have to distort the actual dialogue of Stella very much to become outrageously funny. Stella in its English version is a very bad play. It has none of Goethe's illuminating touches of earthy life to relieve it. The characters burst into gouts of stagey rhetoric reminiscent of Fuseli's early letters to Lavater. 'My heart yearns towards her!'[4] declares Mrs Summers the instant she hears of Stella. 'A sudden thought strikes me - Let us swear an eternal friendship',[5]

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1. Goethe, Stella (London, 1798), p.2.
2. Ibid, p.3.
3. Ibid, p.3.
4. Ibid, p.15.
5. The Anti Jacobin or Weekly Examiner (May, 1798), p.238.

declares Matilda Pottinger thirty seconds after her first meeting with Cecilia Muckinfeldt. 'And do I see thee again! Heavenly sight! do I see thee again - Scene of all my happiness! How still the whole house is',[1] carols Count Ferdinand on his first entry in Stella. There is very little to choose between Goethe and Canning, and the point has to be made that, if some of Goethe's early plays had, in translation, been less inflated and improbable, his reputation in England would have been higher. He or his translators are, in part, responsible for his unacted condition. With the usual liberal sprinkling of prostitutes in the audience, Stella would have been hooted off any London stage. Kotzebue's use of pathos as an approach to problems of sexual irregularity is far more subtle.

All accounts of this period of the English stage stress the part The Rovers played in subduing the German enthusiasm by the brilliance of its wit. In fact The Rovers, despite its title, aims only a few side blows at Schiller and Kotzebue; its main attack is upon Goethe, and upon that vein of plays, and also novels, which centre upon long imprisonment in the bowels of the earth. These incarceration plays are essentially Gothic and owe everything to France and England, little or nothing to Germany. When Rogero comes clanking and bearded from his eleven years in the dungeons of the Abbey of Quedlinburgh to sing his famous song about

'the U-
-niversity of Göttingen'

Canning and Frere are not destroying a genre with mordant wit, they are emphasising a mid point in a highly successful type of musical drama. The Rovers dates from May 1798; some of the most ambitious and applauded plays of the kind it mocks come after it. Samuel Birch's Albert and Adelaide was first performed at Covent Garden on 11th of December 1798.

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1. Stella, p.20.

Prince Hoare's The Captive of Spilburg preceded this by a month, produced at the rival Drury Lane on the 14th of November.[1] Both plays are based on Camille ou Le Souterrain by Marsollier de Vivetiers. Albert and Albertine also draws upon another French play, Les Victimes Cloîtrées by Boutet de Monvel. These in their turn relate back to even earlier French sources, Madame de Genlis's horrific The Duchess of C....[2] and D'Arnauld's Épreuves. With the collapse of censorship after the Revolution there had been a spate of plays in Paris expressing anti-religious feeling by depicting horrific deeds in cells below convents. M.G. Lewis had seen some of these during his Paris visit of 1791 and they may have supplied more inspiration for his novel The Monk than anything which he found in Germany.

So The Rovers was very far from giving a mortal blow to a genre which had been popular in England at least as early as 1767 when Hall Hartson put on a stage version, The Countess of Salisbury, of Leland's novel Longsword Earl of Salisbury.[3] The playbill of Albert and Albertine read 'Taken from the German' but this was because it was more fashionable than saying 'Taken from the French'. Lewis's The Monk is set chiefly in Spain but it is never referred to as a Spanish Gothic novel.

Lewis's writings are as much the object of The Rovers' ridicule as Goethe's. His Castle Spectre had just begun its enormously successful stage career, and Rogero in the vaults of the Abbey of Quedlinburgh is a mockery of Reginald incarcerated under Conway Castle, no doubt with

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1. Albert and Adelaide was performed 18 times, The Captives of Spilburg 15 times.
2. The Duchess of C. was buried alive by her husband under his castle for seven years for refusing to reveal the name of a letter writer. The story is found in Adelaide et Théodore, 3 vols (London, 1783), translated anonymously. Baculard D'Arnauld's hero, Le Comte de Comminge, in the play of that name enters a monastery. He is followed there by his lover, disguised as a man. She dies in his arms in a gloomy vault after living unrecognised with him for many years. The play was published in Paris 1765.
3. T. Leland, Longsword Earl of Salisbury (London, 1762).

a memory of Ambrosio's vaults under the Madrid convent. The scene in no way resembles Old Moor's release from the tower. 'The cruelty of a Minister - The perfidy of a Monk' is a double reference to Lewis's play The Minister, a translation of Kabale und Liebe, and Lewis's notorious novel.

Kotzebue, who might be expected to be a chief butt of Canning's satire, escapes with a single reference to Kamchatka, the setting of his closet play Count Benyowski. It is Stella, by reason of its crude emotional plotting, which supplies most of the humour for The Rovers and Lewis who supplies the foolish settings. This would tend to link Goethe and Lewis together in the public mind as disreputable sensationalists, fit objects for laughter.

Another play of Goethe's was published in this inauspicious year. This was Clavigo. It was translated by C.L. of Oxford and published by Joseph Johnson's faintly 'Jacobinical' publishing house. It was never played, scantily reviewed and given no second edition. It has continued from that time to be the least translated of Goethe's plays, the next single edition of it did not come out until 1897 and in Manchester.

Indeed it is an unsatisfactory creation in its English form. Clavigo's golden youth is not shown, only referred to. Consequently he appears as a weak and worthless central figure. Beaumarchais's part is too slight in the writing to supply a hero. The crucial scene where Carlos persuades Clavigo to desert Maria a second time is convincing in its reasons but unrelieved in its lengthy argument. Clavigo deserves his end on Beaumarchais's sword but he is neither a satisfactory villain nor hero and his final heroics are no more probable in this C.L. version than they were in The Speculator's version. But it is interesting that both C.L. and H. particularly admire the last act, the grossest melodrama of the play. C.L. in the Preface wrote, 'the whole of the fifth act in particular in point of

force and genuine passion are indeed of no ordinary excellence.'[1] He speaks of 'the feeling Goethe' and adds,'The lover of tenderness and nature will find in it a rich profusion of both those essentials of beauty which will coincide with his taste, accompanied at the same time with that force and sublimity which characterise the German fancy'.[2] Though the translation is dated Oxford June 4th 1798 there is no sign of awareness of the ridicule which,just at that time,was being raised by The Anti-Jacobin.

It seems, by The Speculator, Stella and Clavigo, that Goethe in the nineties is being recast in his role of 1779, 'the feeling Goethe', the apostle of tender emotion and passion. This may account for Goetz's late arrival. It does not wholly account for Goethe's eclipse and Kotzebue's triumph, as tender emotion and passion are the staple of both. The only way to explain their varied fortunes in England is by Goethe's sheer inferiority, at this stage and in his English translations, as a dramatist. Certainly Clavigo and Stella in their English version suggest this.

There remain the two versions of Goetz von Berlichingen, both published in 1799. Lest this late date should be seen as a hopeless handicap,with Goetz emerging to a hostile and prejudiced public, it is worth quoting their review from the, admittedly favourable, Analytical Review for 1799, if only to demonstrate how easy it is to select views to prove a point. It reads:

> In the present state of our dramatic literature, we confess ourselves by no mean displeased with the increasing popularity of the German drama. National, like individual, genius may suffer a temporary exhaustion of productive talent... . We would not, therefore, be thought to determine ultimately against the British muses, if we concede that their late dramatic productions have been far inferior to the master-pieces of German drama - (and German literature is but of yesterday): and it is reasonable to hope that the singularity and novelty of thought and of style which, in its present period,the German stage

1. Goethe, Clavidgo (sic) (London, 1798), p.vi.
2. Ibid, p.v.

> exhibits, may infuse a fresh vigour into our own writers, and quicken their declining spirits by the discovery of new prospects, and the display of new machinery.[1]

Despite this introduction both Gortz (of 138 pages) and Goetz (of 216) were without representation on the British stage. An examination of the respective prefaces and texts reveals why. Gortz of Berlingen was published in Liverpool by Rose Lawrence, a local poetess, Goetz of Berlichingen was published in London by Walter Scott, Advocate. 'Monk' Lewis had helped him to secure a publisher. Rose Lawrence's introduction attracts first by its singularly shrewd assessment of Werter: 'a work beautiful in its separate pictures, though in its general tendency unfavourable to virtue and happiness, and which but for this fatal objection, might have ranked with the most successful efforts of modern genius'.[2]

It is, however, this note of literary and historical detachment which links Rose Lawrence and Walter Scott and produces a deadly dullness, a killing remoteness. For the first time in the decade of excitement and enthusiasm the dreary horn of historical scholarship is sounded. Lawrence and Scott both 'understand' Goetz, they 'see it in the context of its time'; paradoxically nothing could be more destructive. The story of Scott's zest for Germany is well known: how he says he was fired by Mackenzie's enthusiasm and joined a group of like minded young men to study German. Then there were his translations of Bürger of 1796, one of these being heavily dependent on Taylor's unpublished translation. Finally there is his Goetz. The strange thing is that he and Rose Lawrence, obviously working apart, adopted the same informal condescending register. This suggests that 1800 is, despite its decimal obviousness, a suitable time to end the study. The

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1. The Analytical Review, XXIX (1799), p.609.
2. J.W. von Goethe, Gortz of Berlingen (Liverpool, 1799), p.V. Translated by Rose Lawrence.

shock and the impact are fading. Exegesis by mildly sophisticated historical scholarship is setting in. Coleridge's dull Wallenstein, 1800, is infinitely more scholarly than Scott's Goetz but its tone is the same. Scott has a trick of bland confidence in his translating style that quite conceals the many occasions when he was actually groping for meaning.[1]

Goetz was written in 1772. Its late arrival in England must be ascribed to the essentially German nature of its plot and characters. To English audiences, well used to the role of the Barons against King John, it must have been very confusing to work out the rights and wrongs of the German barons' cause against the Emperor Maximilian. Who was selfish? Who were the champions of freedom: the freebooting knights or the free cities? Apparently, in the final analysis, neither.

Scott was well aware of the complexity of the historical background. His Preface is largely a leaden exposition of the situation, rather in the style of a Whig historian. 'Among the extensive rights conferred by such a constitution, that of waging war against each other by their own private authority, was most precious to a race of proud and military barons. These private wars were called 'feuds', and the privilege of carrying them on was named F austrecht (club law). As the Empire advanced in civilisation, the evils attending feuds became dreadfully conspicious!'[2]

Clearly Scott is approaching the drama as he approaches the novel. To him, both are tools for the teaching of history, and this is how he interprets Goetz's sucess in its native land. 'In Germany it is the object of enthusiastic admiration; partly owing doubtless to the force of natural partiality towards a performance in which the ancient manners of the country are faithfully and forcibly painted.'[3] Already Ivanhoe is a shape on the horizon.

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1. 'It is not merely that there is a slip here and there; there are literally hundreds of the crudest errors, and scores of om issions evidently due to his despair of making sense...it teems with schoolboy 'howlers'. G.H. Needler, Goethe and Scott (Toronto, 1950), p.28.
2. J.W. von Goethe, Goetz of Berlichingen (London, 1799), p.V. Translated by Walter Scott.
3. Ibid, p.XII.

Rose Lawrence's tone is of an identical didacticism. 'During a long season of turbulence and confusion, the constitution of that great empire had undergone an entire change. The princes, the great nobility, the dignified ecclesiastics, the free cities, had established their usurpations on the ruins of the Imperial authority, and exercised them to the utter depression of the great body of the people, the cultivators of the soil'.[1]

Goetz/Gortz is not being approached as a brilliantly innovative and astonishing work. Instead it is a record wherein 'the ancient manners of the country are faithfully and forcibly painted'.[2] These are not the translations of innovators in literature, least of all are they the responses of fellow poets. They are the condescending, weary voices of informed antiquarians. Goethe is being treated as an antique while he is still in hale middle age, and it is Scott and Lawrence who have aged him. Even the endearing 'Gortz' of Lawrence's title is not a piece of clumsy ignorance but a considered gesture towards English phonetics.

The text of Scott's version appears full despite the actual omissions. In some of the scenes, the third of the first act in particular, when the children all interrupt each other to tell their aunt's story before she can tell it herself, Scott conveys a note of charming domestic simplicity. But the very length and Shakesperian scene profusion of the texts tells against them. If Mrs Inchbald or Benjamin Thompson had handled the play for the stage there would have been fewer characters, many scenes would have been lopped, and at some point a patriotic note applicable to the current war with France would have been introduced. The fault with Goetz is its irrelevance. Even its Secret Tribunal with the cry 'Hast thou the cord and the steel' had been anticipated four years before with James Boaden's play of that

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1. Gortz, trans. Lawrence, p.VII.
2. Goetz, trans. Scott. p.XII.

name The Secret Tribunal, which had a similar password 'earth and groan', and had the advantage, to British tastes, of a happy ending.'

The last episode in the lame and unsatisfactory history of Goethe in the 1790's in Britain is much more positive, but still accords well with the note of confident comprehension which informs both the Goetz translations. In the December 'Monthly Catalogue' of the Monthly Review of 1798 appeared 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre i.e. William Meister's Apprenticeship'. A Romance Edited by Goethe 4 vols. Berlin 1795, 1796'.[2] There followed an intelligent and highly appreciative review with generous translated excerpts. The Bodleian Editor's copy credits this to Beddoes[3]: In the following year the Monthly Mirror[4] printed some of the excerpts without the introduction, making them look like Goethe's direct views, and not the views of Goethe expressed through one of his characters. The Mirror excerpt from the passages explaining Ophelia's character are much longer and more sensually risqué than those in the Review but otherwise the translations are identical and must both be by Beddoes.

This is important because the psycholgical insights which Goethe gives into the motivation of Hamlet and Ophelia are probably more mature and perceptive than anything from any previous English critic. They virtually anticipate the Bradley approach to English literary criticism. Thomas Beddoes M.D. 1760-1808 was a close friend of Coleridge at this time. Coleridge's letters are full of references to him, usually of a medical nature. Coleridge had just left for Germany. The Monthly Review article opens with an apology for its delay, 'had not a disappointment in our foreign correspondence

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1. Scott mentions in his Preface that The Secret Tribunal had been introduced to the English reader 'by several translations from the German particularly the excellent romances called Herman of Unna and Alf von Duilman'. Goetz, trans. Scott, p.XI.
2. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), pp 543-551.
3. See The Monthly Review Indexes of Contributions and Articles by B.C. Nangle (Oxford, 1955), p.XVII.
4. Monthly Mirror, VII (1799), p.235, p.296.

intervened, it would long since have been introduced to public notice'. Therefore Beddoes must have known the Wilhelm Meister analysis before Coleridge left and it is very hard to conceive that he had not made his friend familiar with it. So the Goethe-Coleridge link is early. Beddoes and Coleridge were both indebted to Wedgwood generosity. Beddoes's 'Pneumatic Institution for the treatment of tuberculosis' was in Bristol and had been founded with Wedgwood money. The Monthly Review article by Beddoes comes immediately after a brief and tedious Taylor review of Hints concerning the Old and New Constitution of Germany and the contrast between the two suggests that Coleridge would have owed far more of his enthusiasm for German literature and his early knowledge of it to Beddoes than to William Taylor, since Beddoes appears much more interested and informed than Taylor, and seems recognised as being so.

The Beddoes review deliberately sets out to redeem Goethe from the reputation of the Sorrows of Werter. How necessary that still was is instanced in a letter of Coleridge, 26 October 1798, from Germany. Coleridge lists a number of German authors and inserts, automatically so it seems, after Goethe's name: 'the author of the Sorrows of Werter'.[1] Beddoes insists at the outset 'no characters can differ more widely than those of Meister and Werter', 'the best judges of style and manner would have been foiled in their conjectures concerning the author of the present production, had it been anonymous'[2]. He explains the narrative of the book and Wilhelm's introduction to Shakespeare:

> Immediately, a new world of sensations and ideas is opened to him; and he proves himself capable of feeling whatever the transcendent genius of our poet is capable of inspiring. Shakespeare becomes henceforth the subject of his meditations: in him he lives and breathes.[3]

1. Collected Letters of S.T.C. edited by E.L. Griggs (Oxford, 1956), i, 435.
2. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.543.
3. Ibid, p.544.

There is no element of condescension in Beddoes's account; writing of Goethe he speaks of 'the treasures of his fancy' and 'so remarkable a production'. This is not a case of marvelling at a dog walking on his hind legs but respect for a new insight by a highly intelligent foreigner into an English author. The range of Goethe's imagery is represented in the extracts:

> The reader seems to have open before him the immense books of fate, against which the tempest of busiest life is beating, so as to drive the leaves backwards and forwards with violence.[1]

and writing of the character construction in Hamlet:

> These most perplexing and most complicated of her productions act before us, in his pieces, as if they were clocks of which the dial plate and head were of chrystal. They show, according to their intention, the course of the hours; and you can see at the same time the springs and wheels which impel them.[2]

When he writes of Hamlet's character the unaffected, unguarded self-confidence of Goethe comes over as Wilhelm relates how he had to play the part himself and found that identification was still not enough. 'I thought that I entered fully into the spirit of the part, by taking on myself the load of deep melancholy, and under its pressure following my original through his labyrinth of humours and peculiarities.···However,the farther I proceeded,the more difficult I found the comprehension of the whole'.[3] Finally he makes a satisfying breakthrough by hunting out 'every vestige of the character of Hamlet previously to his father's death', and concludes that the key to the play is that 'Shakespeare designed to exhibit a great deed imposed upon a mind which was not fitted for the commission'.[4]

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1. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.544.
2. Ibid, p.545.
3. Ibid, p.545.
4. Ibid, p.547.

The analysis works on the method of sympathetic identification: a clear anticipation of Keats's 'negative capability' and the 'how many children had Lady Macbeth' method.

It is most impressively demonstrated in the passage only printed in the Mirror. Goethe's interpretation of Ophelia exposes his own sensuous enthusiasm for womanhood as clearly as he showed it in Stella. This is a new note in Shakespearian criticism. 'Her whole essence consists of ripe sensual feeling', is his theme and he hurls himself into its expansion: 'her imagination is infected; her still modesty breathes voluptuous desire; and should the convenient goddess,Opportunity, shake the tree, the fruit would fall forthwith'.[1] Further: 'Decorum, like the gauze on her warm bosom cannot hide the emotions of her breast'. He appreciates Shakespeare's insight in giving the mad Ophelia double entendre and scraps of indecent ditties, and he is soon lost in the character, elaborating the quality of Ophelia's nights: 'The tones of wantonness secretly sounded in her soul ; and how often, like an improvident nurse, may she have tried to lull her feelings to rest with songs that only served to rouse them more?' Finally, 'she diverts herself, in the presence of the king and queen, with the echo of her beloved amatory airs; of the maid who was won; of the maid who steals to her lover's chamber'.[2]

All this, despite Beddoes's disclaimer, is obviously from the same self indulgent and superbly emotional mind that created Stella's unfortunate raptures.

Mrs Summers: 'I see a fleeting image of my golden days, when love first dawned upon the soul'.

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1. Monthly Mirror VII (1799), p.296. A few lines of this appear in Monthly Review XXVII p.549.
2. Ibid, p.296.

Stella: 'Yes the days, the early days of love! No! thou art not gone back to Heaven, golden time! thou art present to each heart when the blossom of love is unfolded'.
Mrs Summers: (pressing her hand) 'Enchanting visions'.[1]

but here the emotional openness is being applied to a literary text and a Shakespeare text at that, so the whole attitude of response becomes acceptable to a nervous, cold English disposition, and even allowable as a tool for scholarship. The analysis of inevitable Destiny sweeping through the play is a fine piece of critical rhetoric.

> The hero has no plan: but the piece is full of plan ... It is the property of crime to scatter evil over the innocent, as it is the quality of virtuous actions to benefit the undeserving; while the agent in each case may be neither punished nor rewarded. How wonderfully is this shown in our play! Purgatory sends forth its spirit to call for vengeance, but in vain. Every circumstance combines to forward vengeance - but in vain. Neither earth nor hell can succeed in what is reserved for Fate. The hour arrives;-and the good fall with the bad. One generation is swept away, and another shoots up.[2]

Goethe's scheme for reforming Hamlet is practical, if impertinent, with its device for cutting out all 'these extraneous, unconnected, confused and confusing motives' like Horatio at Wittenberg, Laertes at Paris, Fortinbras in Poland, and concentrating all of them on the theme of 'trouble in Norway', which Horatio reports, Laertes visits and Hamlet is just about to sail to quell. He ends humorously, promising that the main action is safe 'I cannot close the piece without four corpses. Not one must be left alive!'

What is so interesting and important about these Wilhelm Meister passages is that here Goethe, and seven months later (in the Monthly Mirror only) Schiller, are speaking directly to a British public. Goethe is no longer

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1. Goethe, Stella (London, 1798), p.53. Trans. Benja min Thompson.
2. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.548.
3. Ibid, p.550.

a strange name a distant country; which is what he had remained for an unusually long time, when it is recalled that Werter had been twenty years in translation in this country. No longer in need of incompetent introduction by foreigners, his own views on aesthetics and the morality of the theatre are at last being printed in Britain.

A further sign of the growing interest in Goethe as a critic, rather than a writer of dubious melodrama, was a translation in this same year in the Monthly Magazine of his 'Observations on the Laocoon'. Though this was not strictly literary in its reference it was important for several reasons. Firstly it picked up and extended the influence of Winkelmann, familiarising Englishmen with the pure neo-classical approach to art in general and sculpture in particular. Secondly it was one of the first demonstrations in English of that critical trick of 'reading' a picture or the engraving of a sculpture. This was popularised by Leigh Hunt among others; he taught Keats the method and the Ode on a Grecian Urn was a result of it. It is Negative Capability again.

The actual translation of the article is clumsy and probably not the work of a born English speaker. Some of Goethe's argument is precious and over formalised, but by the end a reasonably convincing example has been given of a particular way of approaching a painting or sculpture. A reader would be likely to try his hand at the same game. The sensibility required was only a lively imagination and a grasp of phrases like: 'parts of a compound work may have a significant relation between themselves', 'the beautiful mythic circle of art', or 'from symmetry and oppositions resulted the possibility of striking out the greatest contrasts by differences hardly sensible'.[1]

Goethe's main point is that the artist has captured a moment in

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1. Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), p.350.

a monument. His point that, if you look at the statue group, shut your eyes, and then open them again you expect to see them in a different position is a fine one. He claims that 'In his own sufferings and those of another, man has only three sensations, fear, terror and compassion'[1], and the sculptor of the Laocoon has caught his three figures in a subtle pose which excites these three emotions from the viewer at the highest possible pitch. The old father in the centre excites terror but he has not been bitten enough to evoke disgust and horror. The younger son on the left excites compassion since he is wholly trapped by one serpent. The elder son on the right may yet escape so he excites hope and the more moderate fear.

The meticulous analysis of how a human body reacts when it is bitten on 'the soft and delicate parts of the body, above, and a little behind the haunch' is more laughable than impressive, but basically the article is about empathy. Goethe senses himself into the three struggling nude figures, working out just how he himself would strain and gesticulate if this buttock had been nipped by a huge python. The method is just that of Wilhelm's playing of Hamlet or his sympathy with the distressed Ophelia. It is the kind of critical approach likely to apply to someone who has responded deeply to novels. It is essentially a Romantic approach, demonstrated paradoxically on a favourite neo-Classical model. Romanticism is a deep response to feeling and that is what Goethe is demonstrating in his contact with the Laocoon.[2]

For Goethe 1799 was the end of an unfortunate episode in Britain and the beginning of a more direct one. For the study of Goethe in England the 1790's were too soon.

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1. Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), p.400.
2. Several poems by Goethe translated in British periodicals in the 1790s are considered in later chapters relating to Taylor and 'Monk' Lewis.

CHAPTER NINE

A prisoner in the Licenser's Tower: the English reception of Schiller's plays, 1790-1800.

Schiller's dramas fared very differently in England to Goethe's. Schiller's plays were famous throughout the decade and were received from the first with awed respect. The Robbers, Fiesco, Don Carlos and Cabal and Love were all well received and their translations went through several editions. At the end of the decade, when The Dramatic Censor was conducting a bitter campaign against the importation of German plays and savaging Kotzebue in every issue, it could still say 'The genius of Schiller is unquestionable'.[1]

Tytler, a friend of Mackenzie, produced his translation of The Robbers in 1792. It came out in the same year in Dublin and, in 1793, in New York. The second edition, 'corrected', came out in all three cities in 1795. The New York edition 'as advertised for representation by Mr Marriott and performed. The passages marked with inverted commas were omitted and those included with crotchets added in the performance'. The third edition (London and Dublin) came out in 1797 and the 4th in 1800 with a challenge to Render 'to point out those scenes and characters which he asserts to be omitted'. Keppel Craven's cut down version of Tytler's translation came out in 1799 as did Render's translation, which leans heavily on Tytler's.

Tytler himself used the Trauerspiel with some lines from the acting version. He did not use the Schauspiel of 1781, which sets the play in a vaguely contemporary period and allows both Amelia and Franz to kill themselves, among many other variations.

Cabal and Love came out anonymously in 1795. It was translated for

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1. The Dramatic Censor, (London, 1800), i, p.77.

Boosey, with a second edition in 1797. M.G. Lewis's version, The Minister, appeared in 1797 with a second edition in 1798. Noehden and Stoddart brought out their Fiesco in 1796 and their Don Carlos in 1798. There was another translation of the second play, by Richardson in 1798. There were American editions of Cabal and Love in 1795 and of Don Carlos in 1799.[1]

While it is not strictly true to say that his plays never appeared on an English stage in this decade, it is very nearly so. His plays, widely praised for their fire and originality, remained closet drama.

The plain reason for this was literary censorship. Schiller's The Robbers was not allowed on a licensed stage. The evidence for this important fact is oddly unemphasised. The Larpent catalogue reveals that between 1776 and 1800 only seven plays were denied a licence.[2] These seven were:-

No.	500	Charles Macklin's	The Man of the World	refused 1779
	845	John St John's	The Island of St Marguerite	refused 1789
	915	George Colman's	She would be a Duchess	refused 1791
	963	George Cumberland's	Richard the Second	refused 1792
	1037	John O'Keefe's	Jenny's Whim	refused 1794
	1104	Lady Wallace's	The Whim	refused 1795
	1179	A Prelude	No Play this night	refused 1797[3]

There is no mention in this list of The Robbers, and yet it was refused. St John's play was refused 'on account of the free sentiments it inculcates', O'Keefe's because it ridiculed the Emperor of Morocco, a living political figure. Possibly Schiller's play was so well known, as well as so dangerous, that even the record of its refusal was not kept in case it should be used

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1. Information from B.Q. Morgan, A critical bibliography, (Stanford & London, 1938).
2. The London Stage 1776-1800, edited C.B. Hogan, 11 vols. (Illinois Univ. Press, 1968), Part V p.CLXXI.
3. Catalogue of the Larpent collection. Huntingdon Library Lists No. 11.

as a political weapon. There is every sign that throughout the nineties The Robbers was considered a quite exceptionally significant and dangerous work.

There are two pieces of evidence that it was actually censored. The first comes from Coleridge in a public lecture The Plot Discovered, delivered at Bristol on November 28th 1795, when the poet was still stoutly Jacobinical in temperament. Discussing the way in which Pitt's proposed bill of November 10th would restrict Thelwall's freedom of political speech, Coleridge declared:

> The public amusements at the Theatre are already under ministerial control. And if the tremendous sublimity of Schiller, if "the Robbers" can be legally suppressed by that thing yclept a Lord Chamberlain, in point of literary exhibition it would be unreasonable for Mr Thelwall to complain.[1]

The phrase 'tremendous sublimity' is drawn from Coleridge's sonnet 'To the author of The Robbers'. The passage on The Robbers from his letter to Southey (3 November 1794) is well known: ''Tis past one o'clock in the morning - I sate down at twelve o'clock to read the Robbers of Schiller - I had read chill and trembling until I came to the part where the Moor fires a pistol over the Robbers who are asleep - I could read no more ... I tremble like an Aspen Leaf'. He had mentioned Schiller in a previous lecture: On The Present War,[2] using Cabal and Love[3] as evidence that a corrupt German prince would sell 'seven thousand young men' to the British as cannon fodder in order to present a casket of jewels to his concubine. So Schiller was obviously a figure with revolutionary connotations for Coleridge, therefore his evidence on his censorship is suspect. But his mere use of Schiller in

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1. Collected Works of Coleridge, edited Patton and Mann, 9 vols. (Princeton, 1971), i, Lectures 1795, p.296.
2. Ibid, p.70.
3. Anonymous translation, Schiller Cabal and Love, (London, 1795), p.25.

the context of such lectures is an indication that Pitt's government might look on the German dramatist with less than favourable eyes.

The second, and virtually irrefutable, piece of evidence for censorship is found in the Advertisement to George Holman's The Red Cross Knights. This is the more convincing by reason of Holman's masochistic determination to justify the licenser's action. Holman realises that 'the introduction of new matter' will 'surprize and disappoint many admirers of that highly celebrated work', The Robbers. He explains his alterations:-

> 'Captivated by its beauties, I had no other plan when I first undertook to prepare the work for the Stage, than to make curtailments, and such variations as most Dramas require that are not native productions. When completed agreeably to this design, its performance was prohibited by the licenser. I was unable at the time to account for this interdict, having carefully expunged all sentiments that appeared to war against establishments and good order'.1

His initial defence of the morality of The Robbers is so well phrased as to be quoted approvingly by The Monthly Review. But Holman turned against himself and wrote:

> 'On a more dispassionate investigation of the Play, however, I found much to justify the licenser's decision. Compunction for villainy seems the peculiar feature of Charles: the rest of the Robbers combine brutal insensibility of their emotions with the most heroic attachment to their leader. This junction of sublime virtue with consummate depravity, though it may be found in nature, should never be dragged into view:- the heroism dazzles the mind, and renders it blind to the atrocity'.2

Before indulging in too much condemnation of Holman's acceptance of censorship it is well to remember that one of the Robbers, Schufterle, boasts, with laughter, of having thrown a crying child into a fire because it was 'starving for cold'. A similar incident in a Bond play still disturbs a

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1. J.C. Holman, The Red Cross Knights (London, 1799), p.i.
2. Ibid, p.ii.

20th century audience, while the heroism of rogues or brutal policemen in television series is often cited as a factor behind juvenile and even adult crime. The Robbers is, even now, a formidable play of intoxicating violence, and the vein of Schiller's fated heroes has even been isolated as one of the forces leading to the Nazi episode in recent German history.

Holman was so determined to get something faintly related to The Robbers onto the licenced theatre's stage that he reset the whole play in Spain and turned the Robbers into Knight-adventurers serving against the Moors. As a result of this the only real remnant of the Schiller plot is the intrigue of Francis, now Roderic, against Charles, now Ferdinand, with Old Moor recast as Count de Ladesma. Amelia is Eugania but, since Ferdinand is restored to both Eugania, his beloved, and Ladesma, his father, in a happy ending, the only recognisable speeches from Schiller are those of the guilty Francis/Roderic: 'Does vengeance dwell above the stars? No, no:- yet there is something here, that tells in dreadful whispers to my soul, there is a judge above the stars! Should I this night appear before him - Why this quaking of the joints? This fearful shuddering? To die! That word congeals my blood. To give account! Ay, and when that reckoning comes, to face the judge - a judge that will do justice!'[1] Which is, word for word, from Tytler's translation of 1792.[2] Francis's version of the Day of Judgement was what M.G. Lewis particularly admired and used in The Castle Spectre, and it is interesting that this outpouring of the apocalypse is what Holman was most determined to retain in his ruined version. The Red Cross Knights, with music for the many songs composed by Attwood and selected from Mozart, was heavily criticised for its ten falls of curtain and only ran for eight performances; but the book of the play went through two editions. It is an absolute trave sty of the original and retains no

1. J.C. Holman, The Red Cross Knights (London, 1799), p.63.
2. Schiller, The Robbers (London, 1792), p.189.

single complete scene, though there is a version of Old Moor's meeting with Charles at the tower in the wood.

In effect, then, the censorship of Larpent, acting for the Lord Chamberlain, appears to have been complete. Can it be assumed that Fiesko, Don Carlos and Kabale und Liebe fell under the same ban? There is no factual evidence, as, apart from Coleridge, no one seems to have felt a sense of outrage at the censorship. Some indication of a translator's expectations, whether he was writing for stage or closet, can be found in the actual length of the translations.[1] For instance, The Red Cross Knights, intended expressly for the stage, has only 68 pages, and 110 pages may be considered the absolute limit for an acting version. Tytler's The Robbers 1792, has 220 pages, Noehden and Stoddart's Fiesco, 1796, has 228 pages, their Don Carlos, 1798, has a bulging 327 pages. Even M.G. Lewis, who might have been expected to write for the stage, rendered Kabale und Liebe as The Minister, 1797, in 220 pages. The only exceptions in the decade are Keppel Craven's The Robbers, 1799, of 104 pages, which was a cut down version of Tytler's translation and had actually been acted on an amateur stage, and the 1795 translation Cabal and Love, of a mere 119 pages.

From these figures it appears that the transla tors all assumed that there was some quality of political or social discussion in all Schiller's plays which made them unsuitable for public performance. Reviewing Fiesco, The Monthly Mirror speaks of 'intellectual enjoyment', and says that the play is 'not calculated for the stage, yet parts of it are so admirable,as to afford the most exquisite pleasure in the closet.'[2] When reviewing

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1. The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, 8 (Dublin, 1802), p.33 comments:
   > The immoderate length of the German plays is one of the first circumstances. There is not a play of Schiller's which would not, if it were to be acted as it is printed, take up at least five or six hours in the representation...this intolerable prolixity arises from want of care in the writers, to mature and digest their plans, and revise and correct their production.'
2. The Monthly Mirror (1796), ii, p.361.

Don Carlos, the same magazine, usually enthusiastic for German works on the English stage, writes 'The author has not, in this instance, composed a work adapted for theatrical representation, but has rather presented to its readers, in a dramatic form, a story well calculated to be the vehicle of admirable moral sentiments, and to excite the stronger feelings of humanity'. Later the same reviewer speaks of the play as 'this dramatic poem'.[1]

A combination of forces is working in this decade of German triumph[2] to keep the foremost German playwright off the stage. There certainly was actual censorship and it was to be expected since every account of Schiller from 1787 onwards associated him with the criminal rebellion of aristocratic youth in Fribourg. All that had actually happened had been an outbreak of theft in Leipsic, but legend in wartime is often more important than fact.

There was also the general tenor of the English stage at this period, which was towards laughter and music. Shakespeare was allowed to be serious since he was safety enshrined as a national treasure. For the rest, even horror, as in the highly successful Castle Spectre, had to be surrounded with comic friars and capers in the moat. Each of Schiller's plays at present under consideration could be construed as seditious. All are libertarian and incline to show authority as corrupt. None of them softens its message with comic scenes or prologues of moral protestations. Any one of them presented at Drury Lane would have attracted demonstration and counter

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1. The Monthly Mirror (1798), vi, p.349, p.352.
2. Looking back on this time in his Memoirs of J.P. Kemble, 2 vols. (London, 1825), ii, p.227, Boaden wrote, "We now half lived upon the Germans and the French, and our native drama was estimated as a very secondary business indeed by managers, who turned to foreign plays, foreign spectacles, foreign romances - to everything foreign to English habits, feelings, and character.

demonstration. Holcroft's very mild Knave or Not[1] had to be withdrawn, so it can be imagined what outcry would have greeted Count Posa's attack on King Philip if an English audience could have been persuaded to hear it:

> 'I cannot but remark how meanly, how contemptibly you think of mankind, when wholesome freedom, like mine, so surprises you, and when you can only consider it as a novelty in the art of flattery. I know you have derived these ideas from the general conduct of mankind. They have voluntarily renounced their dignity and descended to this degraded state. They fly terrified from the shadow of their own greatness, delight in their poverty, ornament with cowardly cunning their chains, which to wear with grace they call virtue. Thus have you become master of the world; thus did it submit to your great father.'[2]

The Robbers was notorious for its youthful violence of expression, but Fiesco with its analysis of revolt and Don Carlos, with its leisurely debate into the nature of power and its manipulation, were far more dangerous in an England where republicanism was a living cause. It seems improbable that any attempt was ever made to adapt either of these last for the stage. The Mirror thought that Cabal and Love, essentially a more personal tragedy, had possibilities,'as a whole we think this play of Schiller's better calculated for the stage,than any of those which have been seen in an English dress.'[3] But even that laboured under the clumsiness of the 1795 version and the length of M.G. Lewis's The Minister. Also, as the title emphasises, court corruption and a German court at that, lies behind the highly 'immoral' personal drama.

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1. This was produced at Drury Lane on 25th January 1798. The chief character, Monrose's, speeches were taken as having a political bearing, following the author's recent appearance before the King's Bench. On the second night a paper was read disclaiming political intention, but the play only ran four nights. Holcroft had had similar trouble in 1794 over Love's Frailties. When he left to live for several years in Germany and France it was because he felt persecuted.
2. Schiller, Don Carlos (London 1798), p.171,translated by G.H. Noehden and Stoddart.
3. The Monthly Mirror (1797), iii, p.357.

Schiller's literary fate in the nineties seems so interwoven with Jacobin protest and weighty private ponderings that the whole frivolous episode of The Robbers and the Margravine of Anspach seems like an invention. But it did occur, and in circles so exalted as to require a particular account. The Robbers was performed several times in a small palace on the banks of the Thames and by close associates of the Prince Regent and the Royal Dukes. That a play so sombre and so censored should have been taken up by this gilded inner circle is a comment both on Schiller's English reputation and on the confidence of the native aristocracy.

Elizabeth, daughter of the 4th Earl of Berkeley, married the 6th Lord Craven in 1767 when she was seventeen years old. She bore him three sons; the youngest, Richard Keppel Craven, being relevant to the Schiller story. Lady Craven was an outstanding beauty. On May 16th 1773 she was caught by her husband in criminal intercourse with the French ambassador, the Comte de Guines, in a house of assignation in Covent Garden. This was forgiven but her adulteries continued. She was a literary friend of Horace Walpole and translated La Somnambule for Strawberry Hill Press in 1778, a limited edition of seventy five copies. In 1779 she wrote a silly, French-style love story set in a ruinous German castle. This was called Modern Anecdote of the Ancient Family of the Kinkervervankotfdarf-prakengotchderns and was published, dedicated to Walpole, in 1781. In 1780 she wrote a comedy The Miniature Picture.

In 1783 she had become such a 'democrat of love' that Lord Craven gave her an allowance and asked her to leave the country. She left, taking her four year old youngest son with her. In Versailles she was a friend of Marie Antoinette, in St Petersburg the Empress interviewed her. She crossed Russia with an escort of Cossacks to the Crimea and was carried to Constantinople in a French frigate. After a stay in Greece she crossed Rumania and met the Emperor Joseph in Hungary. Then she settled with her

friend the Margrave of Anspach at Anspach in 1786 and set up a theatre for amateur theatricals with her adopted sister the Margravine.[1] Joseph, meanwhile made Lady Craven a Princess of the German Empire. After a stay with the Hamiltons in Naples, which exactly establishes her 'tone', she was able to marry the Margrave because Lord Craven and the Margravine had both died. The Margrave sold Anspach to Prussia for an allowance, and he and Lady Craven settled in London at a large villa on the Thames at Hammersmith. This they rechristened Brandenburgh House and here they built a theatre. George III allowed her title of Margravine but not of Princess. The theatre was ready for theatricals in 1792 and each year there was a season. The Margravine was in the heart of Regency society, which again exactly establishes its tone of confident extrovert eclecticism

She went to strawberry parties with the Prince Regent. He and Lady Jersey, the Duke of Clarence, Lady Blessington, the Duke of St. Albans, Lord Barrymore and the Countess of Buckingham, all patronised her theatre, though a newspaper in December 1796 wrote spitefully 'The Margravine is about to renew her theatricals, but how she is to make up a warm audience will exceed even her ingenuity at this season to decide.'[2]

Her practice was to cut five act plays to three acts, take the best part for herself and the best man's part for her son Richard. Then it was a matter of persuading people like the Countess of Buckingham to take minor roles. A version of The Robbers was performed. This was called The Gauntlet. What kind of version it was, can be judged by Henry Angelo's account of acting in it.[3]

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1. Louisa Mercier, later to become Holcroft's third wife, was brought up in the Craven household at this time.
2. An unnamed newspaper source quoted in A.M. Broadley and L. Melville's, The Beautiful Lady Craven (London, 1914).
3. Henry Agnelo, Reminiscences, 2 vols. (London, 1830), ii, p.33.

Angelo played Charles de Moor's part, but now called Wolfganga (sic), a captain of banditti and no longer the leading role.

> 'Previous to my intended plan of robbing the Bishop of Fulda (Joe Maddock) of two hundred marks, I have to wait in a forest for him; I meet with a woodcutter (a Prince in disguise, Keppel Craven); this produces an encounter; we fight, and I am killed, and ought to fall immediately. This death, so very premature, was not pleasing to me. As the grand voleur, the chief of the banditti, I considered myself entitled to a better exit.'

To cut a long story short, Angelo added a speech and was severely reprimanded by the Margravine. When he next played the part 'I thought I would not do better than give the growl of a bear as a sort of new reading ...and from the laughterthat followed I had reason to believe that my comic attempt was well relished.'

This gives some idea of the character of that particular private theatre. Surprisingly, however, the Margravine was not finished with The Robbers. She may have felt a particular bond with Schiller because town gossip reported that she was the original of Lady Milton in Kabale und Liebe.[1] Whatever the reason she was determined to play Amelia, and this she did at the age of forty eight.

The Lady's Monthly Museum for June 1798 reported:

> The celebrated tragedy of The Robbers, translated from the German with considerable emendations by the Hon. Keppel Craven, was performed at this theatre (Brandenburgh House). A most brilliant and crowded audience attended and expressed the greatest satisfaction at the merit of the piece and the performers. Amelia was performed with all the taste, pathos and classical propriety which so eminently distinguishes the sensibility and accomplished mind of the Margravine ...The Margravine spoke a most pointed and brilliant epilogue with a charming excellence that was irresistibly impressive on the feelings of the audience.[2]

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1. This was reported falsely in Sir Robert Morier's Memoirs, 2 vols. (London, 1911), ii, p.300. The play was written before Lady Craven's first visit to Germany.
2. Quoted in G. Paston, Little Memoirs of the 18th cent. (London, 1901), p.184. There is a good account of the reviews in the Morning Post in L.A. Willoughby, 'English Translations and Adaptations of Schiller's Robbers'. MLR. xvi (1921), 297-315.

This in itself is a remarkable, though light hearted, insight into the status of the play in polite society. But there was a conclusion. The play's reputation was so Jacobinical that attacks on this performance appeared in the press and, such was the tension of the times and the reputation of Schiller, that the Margravine, to kill scandal after forty nine scandalous years, was obliged to publish the text of The Robbers as she claimed to have produced it:

> The Robbers a tragedy in five acts. Translated and Altered from the German as it was performed at Brandenburgh House Theatre. With a Preface, Prologue and Epilogue written by Her Serene Highness the Margravine of Anspach.
>
> London. Printed for W.Wigstead and M. Hooper 1799.

Schiller's name is not mentioned. The Preface declares firmly:

> This play is published as it was performed at Brandenburgh House, in order that any persons who may have read the exact Translations of it from the German, may be enabled to judge of the ungenerous and false aspersions of Newspaper Writers, who have, by various paragraphs, insinuated that it was played there with all the Jacobinical Speeches that abound in the Original.

The Margravine's Prologue speaks of the play as 'This fam'd exotic pruned with British care', and lists its moral lessons, 'instructing every child/To bear a parent's frown with patience mild'[1], concluding that 'Man to be reclaim'd must be forgiv'n!' The Epilogue, clearly written after the scandal had blown up, attacks newspapers:

> Folks rich in fame are basely robb'd by those
> Who, 'stead of bludgeon, use newspaper prose,
> With which they oft despoil a spotless name,
> Then, whispering, ask your money or your Fame.

While the direction of the attacks is indicated by:

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1. Schiller, Keppel Craven, The Robbers, Translated and Altered (London, 1798), p.1.

A num'rous skulking band call'd Pamphleteers
They thundered out Invasion in our ears.[1]

an echo of that invasion scare which involved Wordsworth and his sister in 1797-1798, and which prevented them from renewing the lease of Alfoxden.

The actual text of the play is almost wholly Tytler's 1792 translation, but cut from two hundred and twenty pages to ninety nine. As with Holman's The Red Cross Knights the machinations of Francis are considered acceptable, but on p.17 (p.26 in Tytler) Charles's first speech is immediately cut, losing the egalitarian social protest of: 'What a damn'd inequality in the lot of mankind! - While the gold lies useless in the mouldy coffer of the miser, the leaden hand of poverty checks the daring flight of youth and chills the fire of enterprise'. The pruning continues in this way, losing the anti-Peace speech 'Curse on that peace, that would confine to earth the flight of an eagle'[2], but retaining intact Spiegelberg's witty assault on the ro guery of London and Paris. The thievery and pickpocketing in the streets were safe ground for criticism; it was political thought which needed to be axed.

Richard Keppel Craven neatly picks up Francis's threat, in Act III Sc. i, of putting Amelia in a cloister, to avoid the harshest part of the play's conclusion. When Amelia has chased Francis out with his own sword Craven has her declare 'I will fly this horrid castle; and,in a convent,try to forget the name of Moor - myself! - and learn - alas alas, I have lived a martyr! - in a convent, like a saint, I'll learn to die. (Exit in despair)'[3], after which she is not seen again in the play. The Margravine/Amelia must have been spared the decision whether to reveal her 'bosom', after Tytler's stage direction, or her 'neck', as Render's

1. Schiller, Keppel Craven, The Robbers, Translated and Altered (London, 1798), p.102.
2. Tytler, The Robbers (London 1792), p.28.
3. The Robbers Translated and Altered, p.57.

later direction reads, when Charles has torn the handkerchief from her person in the last scene.

But this cut down version remains a recognisable Robbers, it is not a ludicrous parody like Holman's publicly performed version. The noble scene on the Danube bank is there, reduced to four pages, but retaining the hero - sun comparison, 'Tis thus the hero falls; - 'tis thus he dies in godlike majesty'. Most of the meeting between Charles and his father in the tower survives, and the old man is allowed to die in despair with no contrived happy ending. Moor gives himself up on the last page to help some poor man. The Margravine had atoned for her literary sins of performing The Gauntlet.

The whole episode is as important as it is amusing. The Robbers, in spite of censorship from the Lord Chamberlain's minion Larpent, was performed several times before influential audiences and surrounded by a considerable furore in the press. The event was widely registered. Hannah More, the apostle of Low Church Protestantism, made a magnificent protest in Strictures on the modern system of Female Education (London, 1799). She wrote that, 'Those ladies who take the lead in society...are called upon to oppose with the whole weight of their influence,the ruption of those swarms of publications that are daily issuing from the banks of the Danube; which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other arms, are overruning civilised society'. She saw the minds of the educated being....

> ....hurried back to the reign of 'chaos and old night' by wild and mis-shapen supersititions, in which, with that consistency which forms so striking a feature of the new philosophy, those who deny the immortality of the soul are most eager to introduce the machinery of ghosts; and by terrific and unprincipled composition,unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot.*

then, in a footnote, she aims her thrust at the Margavine:

> *Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers, which inflamed the young nobility

> of Germany to inlist themselves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now acting in England by persons of quality![1]

We are back in the central predicament of German literature in England at this period. It does tend to be introduced by people with the 'morals of Bagshot' and it is, therefore, vulnerable to any of the periodic waves of English morality, pendulum swings towards Festivals of Light. The Margravine takes her place alongside Fuseli, Holcroft, Mary Wolstonecroft, Joseph Johnson, William Taylor, Blake in the ranks of the Germanophiles; and they are all inclined to experiment, sexually or mentally or both, and this seems to be one of the traits which draws them to a wilder, freer literature. The Margravine is interesting simply because she stood so high in society that she could indulge herself in Schiller, the final emotional vice. Yet even she was obliged by the force of public reaction to retreat and to cover herself with the 'altered' publication. In some ways she was perfectly placed to be the person to introduce Schiller to England in the mid-nineties. She was widely travelled, she was indifferent to her moral reputation. She had Emma Hamilton to train her for public 'Postures'. She had spent four years in Germany from 1786-1790, the ideal time; and she had money. Society was sufficiently raffish and lively for 'curiosities' to support her; she moved in the very highest circles, yet even she failed.

There was a reason for this failure. In 1799 Germany had come under a recent and very dark cloud: one that is very hard to appreciate at this distance in time, as all theories of conspiracy savour of hysteria and of snow on Russian boots. But at the time the panic was general and its

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1. Hannah More, Strictures on the modern system of Female Education, 2 vols. (London, 1799), i, p.37-38.

literary support survives to be examined: something essentially separate from Goethe, Schiller and Kotzebue, yet which involved the fortunes of all three in this country. Hannah More names the menace. 'The modern apostles of infidelity and immorality', she wrote, 'deprived of the assistance of the French press ... are now attempting to attain their object under the close and more artificial veil of German literature ... Poetry as well as prose, romance as well as history; writings on philosophical as well as political subjects, have thus been employed to instil the principles of Illuminism.'[1]

The Illuminati, rather than the Jacobins, were the fashionable bogies of England between 1798 and 1800. The episode can only be compared with the McArthyite scares of America in the fifties. Dangerous and credible within their limited life cycle they both dwindled quickly, leaving only a disturbed memory of documents in pumpkins and secret embassies to high degrees of Masonry. The first hints of the Illuminati's workings are found in this country in Holcroft's translations of The secret history of the Court of Berlin, 1789. The rise of Napoleon provided a solider monster for imaginations to dwell upon, and after 1800 much less is heard of the movement's threat. The persecution mania left few human victims as there were so few to persecute; even the founder and Archpriest survived comfortably in Gotha to be lionised by Crabb Robinson. The real victims of the Illuminati panic were the literary reputations of virtually all German writers in England, caught by implication of mere nationality in a supposed web of conspiracy.

To understand the strength of the scare it needs to be remembered that the peril of the British state in 1798 was at least as extreme

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1. Hannah More, Strictures, 2 vols. (London, 1799), i. p.40.

as in 1940, and the collapse of the European order at that time far more spectacular than the triumphs of Hitler. Furthermore Nazism was not a tempting alternative political philosophy as was the new order of Republican France; nor was a good two thirds of the literary establishment inclined, in 1940, to think favourably of the official enemy, as they were in 1798. Questioned much later, Southey said that it was as natural to have been a republican as to have been a child.

Crabb Robinson summarises the Illuminati movement in his diary.

> During the heat of the first Revolution in France, two works appeared, one in England, by Professor Robinson of Edinburgh, and the other, the more voluminous, in France, by the Abbé Barruel, with the common object of showing that the Revolution and all the horrors consequent upon it were the effect of a conspiracy deliberately planned and carried out on the Continent of Europe by an Order of Infidels, who by means of secret societies, planned to destroy all thrones, overturn all altars, and completely upset the established order of things. The society to which this scheme was ascribed had the name of The Illuminati. They were supposed to have ramifications everywhere. The Kantian philosophy was one of the instruments. Indeed, more or less, every union of men, and every variety of thought, opposed to monarchy and popery had about it the suspicion of "Illumination". And of this tremendous evil the founder and archdeacon was Adam Weishaupt.[1]

Crabb Robinson is understandably not quite accurate about the publications, which were popular and voluminous.

The Abbé Barruel, a right wing clergyman who had taken refuge from the Revolution in England, published Memoirs illustrating the History of Jacobinism in the following order:

2 volumes in French, London 1797.

4 volumes in English, London 1797-98.

5 volumes in French, Hambourg 1798-99.

A summary in one volume, entitled Memoirs illustrating the Antichristian Conspiracy, by the Hon. R. Clifford, was published in Dublin in 1798. The

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1. Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, edited Sadler, 3 vols. (London, 1869), 1, p.192.

same author, Clifford, published Application of Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism to the Secret Societies of Ireland and Great Britain in London in 1798.

The parallel alarum bell, Dr John Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the religions and governments of Europe, was first published in Edinburgh and London in 1797. It had gone through four editions and an Irish edition within a year and in 1798 was published in London in a French version, so its popularity was considerable.

To read Barruel and Robison is a hypnotic experience. They are both so confident and wide ranging in their scope, and then so exact and circumstantial in their detail that the reader begins to wonder whether, behind all this smoke, there must not have been at least a little fire. In volume four of Barruel, on page 369, Nicolas de Bonneville, part translator of Nouveau Théâtre Allemand and friend of Holcroft, rejoins the story. De Bonneville, with Savalette, had made the Committee of the Amis-réunis 'the central point of revolution and of the mysteries'. It was to this committee that Mirabeau (author, be it recalled, of The Secret History of the Court of Berlin, a work which Barruel sees as profoundly provocative of revolution, and which Holcroft certainly translated) has directed the 'illuminizing brethren from Germany' on their mission to persuade the Free Masons of France to adopt 'their new mysteries'.

Here, according to Barruel, in this Committee of the Amis-réunis, is gathered together a positively Gothic selection of deputations. 'There were to be seen the Elect of the Philaletes, the profound Rosicrucians and Knights Kadosch, the Elect of the Rue Sourdière, of the Nine Sisters, of the Lodge of Candour, and of the most secret committees of the Grand Orient.'[1] The master of the Grand Orient, the principal Lodge in France,

1. Barruel, Memoirs of Jacobinism, 4 vols. (London, 1798), IV, p.369.

was the Duke of Orleans, and his mistress was Madame de Genlis who was last noticed in this study wearing a necklace of polished stone from the Bastille at a dinner in Hackney in 1792 held to honour Talleyrand.

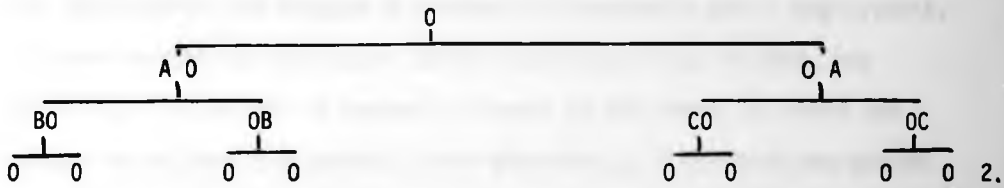
Madame de Genlis does not actually feature in Barruel's books but the ramifications of the supposed plot make the Scarlet Pimpernel read like sober history. But when the reader begins to remember that a king was executed, a number of crowns did fall and a religious system eighteen hundred years old was temporarily overthrown, then the Illuminist panic of 1798 and the anti German feeling of a war-girt island begins to become comprehensible.

Barruel's four great Conspirators, dedicated to the downfall of Christianity were Voltaire, D'Alembert,[1] Frederick the Great and Diderot. The basic plot, in which Rousseau and the Encyclopedists were involved, was to spread over the whole of Europe a maze of publications which would shake the faith of the unwary in all established institutions. It is at this point that the Illuminati come into the story. Germany published more books than any country in Europe and, by reason of its political subdivisions, censorship there could be most easily avoided. Adam Weishaupt, a professor of Ingolstadt university, had founded in 1775 the order of the Illuminati. Weishaupt was 'the modern Spartacus', and his Illuminati were 'the Sophisters of Impiety' dedicated to the disappearance, without violence, of Princes and Nations from the face of the earth. They represented Property as the bane of Liberty and Equality; class systems were to vanish and language was to become universal.

The Illuminati were officially banned in 1786 but Weishaupt had a system which circumvented any prohibition. This was 'The mode of diffusing universal light'. It was essentially that of the subdividing cell: 'begin

1. It was D'Alembert who protected and educated De Bonneville after he had been expelled from his school at Évreux in 1783 for defending Rousseau on prayer.

with yourself; then turn towards your next neighbour, you two can enlighten a third and fourth; let these, in the same manner, extend and multiply the number of the children of light, until numbers and force shall throw power into your hands'. Then followed an ominous illustrated device, showing how these children of light 'will be able to bind the hands of your opponents, to subjugate them, and to stifle wickedness in embrio, that is to say, every principle of civil or political society.'[1]



2.

It was the literary or publishing side to this cellular growth which was particularly stressed in England. The British Critic, in 1799, noted with alarm: 'the astonishing influence of not less than 8000 writers and scribblers of all descriptions, who are continually operating upon public opinion in Germany; ninety-nine hundredths of whom are devoted to the cause of the sophists. The Princes, says he, are lulled into a false security, by seeing their literati constantly uniting licentiousness in their writings with servility in their conduct.[3]

After reading this an Englishman would be bound to notice the extraordinary torrent of the writings of Kotzebue and, in lesser measure, Iffland, Schiller, Goethe and Naubert, which had been entering England in the last few years and wonder whether perhaps there was not the hand of the Illuminati

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1. Barruel, Memoirs of Jacobinism, III, p.169
2. Taken from, Application of Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism (London, 1798), p.xiii. Anonymous but by R. Clifford.
3. The British Critic (1799), xiv, p.54 from a review of Lètres d'un voyageur à l'abbé Barruel. Ancedotes sur quelques grand Personages, Chronique Scandaleuse et etc. (London, 1799).

behind this literary invasion. Kotzebue's plays in particular could be construed as 'licentious', so there was further evidence.

Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy was even more alarming, more anti-German and more circumstantial. The author was Professor of Natural Philosophy and Secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He had been an active Free Mason and had been inducted into several Continental lodges. There he had become disturbed by the zeal and fanaticism of masonry, 'Men of rank and fortune, and engaged in serious and honourable public employments, not only frequenting the Lodges of the cities where they resided, but journeying from one end of Germany or France to the other, to visit new Lodges, or to learn new secrets or new doctrines... I saw that the Jesuits had several times interfered in it; and that most of the exceptionable innovations and dissentions had arisen about the time that the order of Loyola was suppressed ... I saw it much disturbed by the mystical whims of J. Behmen and Swedenborg - by the fanatical and knavish doctrines of the modern Rosycrucians.'[1].

Robison carefully traces the foundation of the Lodge Theodore in Munich, 'of the zealous members of the Lodge Theodore the most conspicuous was Dr Adam Weishaupt'.[2] Educated by the Jesuits, Weishaupt had offered some ex-Jesuits the chance to educate youth 'now emancipated from all civil and religious prejudices', but they had refused and he became their implacable enemy. Banned by the Elector of Bavaria the movement had gone underground and now worked through Reading Societies, Debating Clubs and publishing to spread its principles.

Robison claims that the order was said to abjure Christianity and

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1. J. Robison, Proofs of a Conspiracy (London, 1797), p.5-6.
2. Ibid, p.101.

restored sensual pleasures 'to the rank they held in the Epicurean philosophy' but justified 'self murder' on Stoical principles (a reminder to English readers of tendencies in both Goethe and Schiller). Death, they said, was an eternal sleep. The baneful influence of accumulated property was declared an insurmountable obstacle to the happiness of any nation whose chief laws would be framed for its protection and increase. Patriotism and loyalty were called narrow minded prejudices and continual declamations were made for liberty and equality as the inalienable rights of man.

It is tempting to think, from these attitudes to patriotism and property, that Robison was deliberately crediting the Illuminates with Godwin's views from Political Justice. But Godwin owed so much to continental thinkers like Holbach that it is not possible to be sure that the malice was deliberate.

Mirabeau and the Histoire secrète de la Cour de Berlin feature in Robison[1] as in Barruel. With a mass of detailed case histories of dissolute German professors like Bahrdt, who spend his life corrupting student youth in wine taverns before dying 'the most wretched and loathsome victim of unbridled sensuality'[2], Robison brings his reader to the conclusion 'that the present awful situation of Europe, and the general fermentation of the public mind in all the nations, have not been altogether the natural operations of discontent, oppression ... but that this political fever has been carefully and systematically heightened by bodies of men, who professed to be the physicians of the State'.[3]

As an instrument of right wing reaction Robison's book is excellent: there is a plot on every other page, the style conveys a moderate and sensible mind, there is little of the speculation and uncertainty which

1. J. Robison, Proofs of a Conspiracy (London, 1797), p.274.
2. Ibid. p.340.
3. Ibid. p.425.

mars Barruel's argument,[1] names and places ring convincingly and the book itself is dedicated,with permission,to the Right Honourable William Wyndham, Secretary at War.

By what is, perhaps, but improbably, a coincidence, Dugald Stewart was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh. He and Holcroft were both friends of De Bonneville who had been educated by the Free Mason d'Alembert, and De Bonneville had come up to Scotland to associate with Free Masons. In 1788 De Bonneville[2] published Des Jésuites chassés de la Franc Maçonnerie, which aimed to prove that the Jesuits were attempting to manipulate the Masons. This line of investigation is probably better concluded before the entire movement of German literature in to England comes to be seen as a plot of renegade German Jesuits enrolled into Free Masonry to subvert the Universal Structure!

It was,however, all very serious in its time. Burke himself hailed Barruel's first volume with a letter from his sick bed: 'The tendency of the whole is admirable in every point of view, political, religious, and, let me make use of the abused word, philosophical ... I have known myself, personally, five of your principal conspirators; and I can undertake to say from my own certain knowledge, that so far back as the year 1773, they were busy in the plot you have described'[3]. It is, also, true that Holbach was one of Barruel's secondary conspirators and Holbach certainly influenced Godwin. Godwin's doctrines as stated in his Political Justice are basically akin to those of Weishaupt. Godwin was the friend of Holcroft, Johnson and the young Wordsworth, to name only a few, so the chains of

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1. Even the right wing British Critic was suspicious of some of his links, XIII, p.391.
2. As a Girondist he lay low in the Terror. He retired to America where he translated Tom Paine's Maritime Compact.
3. Quoted in the Advertisement to Barruel's second volume. By the time this came out Burke was dead.

influence and connection did run very much as Weishaupt had suggested they might. In one sense The Borderers is an end product of Illuminism.

Whatever the truth behind these theories of conspiracy, they did Schiller no good service. He had been associated with the corruption of youth and the overthrow of established systems from the first mention of his name in print in Scotland in 1787. His English apologists had had an uphill task. Now, after Barruel and Robison's books even the Margravine was in a posture of nervous defence. It was possible to consider him as a part of an international plot linked to foreign mystery cults and the enemy across the Channel. This, in fact, is what Hannah More did.

At this sensitive time, in its December issue of 1799 (an issue which opened with a portrait and biographical sketch of that resolute old Jacobin Thomas Holcroft) the Monthly Mirror printed an extensive essay by Schiller,[1] entitled 'What are the particular effects of the Stage?' originally read to the Mannheim Society 'in the public sitting, on the 26th June, 1784'. The Mirror was a markedly liberal periodical which prided itself on having been the first in England, back in 1796,[2] to recognise Kotzebue's genius, and in the previous May of 1799, it had printed the second translated extract in England of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship,[3] so there was no malicious intention behind this publication of Schiller's analysis of the power and range of drama. Tactically, however, it was ill timed as it confirmed much that Barruel and Robison had been saying about a literary conspiracy. The essay makes a most interesting contrast with The Speculator's essay on Schiller of May 1790. Its mere publication

1. The Monthly Mirror, (December 1799), viii, p.357 and (January, 1800), ix, p.42.
2. The Monthly Mirror, (1796), ii, p.165.
3. The Monthly Mirror, (1799), vii, p.296.

may indicate that England at the end of the decade was prepared to take a more serious sociological view of the theatre. It certainly underlines the self indulgence and immaturity of the English aesthetic response to Schiller at the start of the decade in The Speculator.

The critic of The Speculator, the same H who had introduced Goethe in Number XIII, earlier in the same month, is almost wholly subjective in his response, alternating between astonished rapture and condescending hints for improvement. His weakness is his recourse to the abstract, he is usually analysing his own response rather than Schiller's writing and there is, for the 18th century, unusually little reference to text or plotting. He seems intent on preserving two contradictory responses to Schiller, admiration and distaste, and never notices that if Schiller had moderated his writing to avoid provoking distaste he would then have aroused no admiration.

> But when, as it so often happens in works of genius, defects and graces are closely interwoven, and the highest beauties usher in the grossest faults, the impartiality of cool and candid investigation is not easily preserved. On one side, the warmth and sensibility of keen admiration is apt to dictate the language of indefinite panegyric; while on the other, the rigour of colder judgements, disgusted by imperfections and absurdities, overlooks real merit in one general sentence of condemnation.[1]

Schiller, he finds 'hazards everything in pursuit of strength, elevation and novelty of thought'; then the reviewer lapses into his own 'indefinite panegyric':

> Imagery the most vivid and daring, situations singular and impressive, the verbum ardens pushed almost to rashness, a structure of language full of nerve, rich and dignified ... Like our Shakespeare, he sometimes delights and affects, even while he violates every rule, and leaves far behind him the decorum of scene and the strictness of propriety; satisfied to bid the human heart glow with the fire of communicated passion, or the imagination expand to a grandeur of conception.[2]

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1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p. 237.
2. Ibid. p. 238.

This is enthusiastic writing, but it is the writing of someone who is only half analysing his own response. Is the 'communicated passion' a worthy one? What is the particular 'grandeur of conception'? Is it mere rhetoric or a vision of society? Would the writer's view of 'decorum' and 'propriety' be satisfied with Addison's Cato? He specifies Marquis Posa, Lady Milford and Verrina as having 'traces of high originality', but misses 'the little nicer and more delicate touches of discrimination which mark the pictures of Shakespeare, and stamp the personages drawn by his poetic fancy with the truth and reality of nature itself.' This is very near to being an analysis of the whole nature of melodrama as we now understand it. But having isolated the unreality of this move from Nature, the writer then shows himself a child of his time by praising it: 'In the hands of Schiller, the strings of the human heart are struck with a boldness approaching temerity'. 'Fiery and unfettered, his genius has delighted to seek the loftier and more inaccessible regions of tragic poetry; to expand, as in its native element, amidst the shock and tempest of the fiercer passions, which convulse the soul and lay desolate the breast of man'.[1] Such passages, with their conventional metaphors, clearly convey admiration, but then follows illogical reserve;

> The effort so constantly exerted to stamp conception with fire and energy is liable to be overstrained, and not infrequently produces images, too near the brink of horror and disgust to operate the effects of pleasure or admiration. From a similar cause expression is often rendered harsh, and metaphor carried to obscurity; while in the more forcible painting of passion, a roughness is apt to interweave itself, against which the polish of modern manners may revolt as coarse and indelicate.[2]

What is absent from all this is any thought for the messages of Schiller's plays. The critic is so involved with the reaction of 'modern manners'

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1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.239.
2. Ibid. p.240-241.

to 'fire and energy' that he never considers the social, political or personal implications of the plays or the possible relevance of this style of writing to his contemporary theatre, though he does speak at one point of Schiller's faults as 'having not a little reference to our own drama'.[1] But this is never expanded.

It is possible to judge this H and S writer as a drama critic by reading his lengthy response, in Number XIV of the periodical, to Timon of Athens. Defending the play from accusation of exaggerated passion, he aims to prove 'that on the ruins of our best feelings the temple of misanthropy is ever erected'. But again the response is wholly subjective, nine pages describe how, hypothetically, hopeful youth could collapse into bitter anger. There is only one line of quotation from Timon and no single reference to an incident in the play.

The Critical Review for 1792, reviewing Tytler's translation of The Robbers, follows The Speculator's line closely: 'The delicacy of the passions, if we may be allowed the phrase, is, we believe, at present, little known on the German stage. They are all violent, and calculated to agitate and tear the soul, ... When they write unresisted nature storms the breast and a correspondent feeling communicates itself to our minds: when we find ourselves thrilled with horror, or melted into tears, we can excuse the violation of the unities.'[2]

There is something false in such a reaction. Any English writer would be accustomed to Shakespeare and unlikely to be unduly concerned about the unities. Possibly there is a memory here of the introductions by Junker and Friedel to their French collections of German plays in the late eighties, as these were often quoted in English periodicals and made

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1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.240.
2. Critical Review, New Series (1792), vi, p.217.

much play over the violation of the unities and the break from Gottsched.

The same review intelligently defined the German advantage: 'it is not yet cramped with the fetters of criticism as generally in nations arrived at a greater length of literary perfection, and consequently possessing a corrector,but more fastidious taste', then demonstrated how little he had weighed the dangers of the 'fastidious' by complaining that the translation was 'not in general defective in spirit and energy, but too often in elegance and purity of diction'.[1]

Schiller's analysis, from the 1799 Monthly Mirror excerpt, is in a different world. He is wholly concerned with the power of the theatre to reform the world from its corruption, and he sees drama as the natural successor to an enfeebled Church. This is why his writing was so provocative in pietistic England. 'Religion ceases, with the greater part of mankind, if we annihilate its parables and dogmas; its pictures of felicity and damnation: yet are these merely visions of the fancy; aenigmas without solution; bugbears and Jack o'lanthorns of the night',[2] The contempt for religion is open in this writing. He sees drama as inheriting all the antique neuroses and sweeping them clean by the Stage, 'where Providence expounds its aenigmas, and develops all its intricacies; where the human heart,upon the rock of passions, confesses its slightest movements; where all masks, all disguise disappear, and truth, pure and incorruptible as the justice of Rhadamanthus, shines in open day.'[3]

Confidently Schiller asserts that his own plays are already affecting this process of moral illumination: 'I have been a witness myself, more than once, to the reproach - "The man is a Francis Moor" - to express

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1. Critical Review (1792), vi, p.217.p.209.
2. The Monthly Mirror (1799), viii, p.358.
3. Ibid.

the horror felt for bad deeds'. He is most anxious, coincidentally, for Timon of Athens to be played in Germany: 'so surely as I look for the human character of Shakespeare, in preference to all other writers, so surely know I no other play of Shakespeare's, in which it stands more truly before me, speaks more simply or eloquently to my heart,or in which I learn more of life's wisdom, than in Timon of Athens'.[1] This play, with Lear, has more of the Sturm und Drang spirit than any other in the canon, and it is interesting that The Speculator critic of 1790 chose to concentrate on the play. He was a fluent German reader and the Schiller essay dates back to 1784, though it did not appear in England until these issues of The Mirror of 1799 and 1800.

In the second half of the essay[2], Schiller treads on even more dangerous ground. Because the stage 'made man known to man, and first disclosed the secret movements of his mind' it could legitimately excuse theft and even suicide. 'Suicide is commonly abhorred as impiety, yet when Marian, assaulted by love, by the threatenings of an enraged father, by the image of a frightful cloister, drinks the poison, which of us would be the first to pass sentence on the unfortunate victim of an accursed prejudice? Toleration and humanity become the predominating feelings of our times: their rays penetrate to the seat of justice; - yea, farther still, even to the hearts of our princes'.

Whatever the rights of the matter, Hannah More was not mistaken in declaring that permissiveness was being spread from the banks of the Danube by 'swarms of publications', which were 'like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other arms'.

Schiller is militant for the theatre, 'juster notions, more enlightened

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2. The Monthly Mirror (1800), ix, pp42-46.

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1. The Monthly Mirror (1799), viii, p.360.
2. The Monthly Mirror (1800), ix, pp42-46.

principles, purer feelings, flow hence through all the veins of a people'. He is anxious for drama to explore the subject of education: 'It belongs to the stage, alone, to exhibit the unfortunate victims of neglected education, in touching and affecting forms'. He also sees it as an instrument to manipulate the state: 'The stage, is likewise, an excellent means by which the ministers and guardians of a state may correct the opinions of the nation ... the legislative speaks to its subjects, in borrowed symbols; justifies itself against their complaints, before they become public; and unperceivedly silences their murmurs', which suggests a more sinister extension of central power than Pitt ever reached out to grasp. Finally Schiller sees the theatre as creating nationalism: 'The agreement in the opinions and tastes of a people upon points respecting which other nations think and feel differently, I call national spirit. It is the power of the stage alone to produce this conformity in a high degree; because she alone traverses the whole empire of human knowledge, exhausts every situation of life, because she alone unites in herself all classes and conditions, and possesses the directest way to heart and head.'

The mere appearance of this Schiller translation at such a time is significant. The English reviewers of the decade had never moved far from The Speculator's line of nervous admiration for the German's spirit and energy. They had never seen adequate performances of complete texts, consequently they responded, as did The Speculator, with an essentially internal frisson. The Schiller review makes a claim for plays as live theatre, for contact with the masses, as instruments of social improvement. He is suggesting nothing less than an apparatus for creating a totalitarian state with a more efficient form of religion. La Martelière's version of The Robbers - Robert Chef des Brigands had proved a notable prop to the revolutionary scene in Paris. With its happy ending of Robert pardoned by the Emperor and the robber band turning into policemen, it had run

three nights a week for many months. The Mirror is floating a cautious appeal for social drama in publishing this essay. This does much to explain the anti-German malice of its right wing rival The Dramatic Censor.[1]

The idea of a 'committed' revolutionary theatre would not have been alien to the liberal enthusiasts of the period in England. Writers like Holcroft,Godwin and Mrs Inchbald were writing 'committed' novels like Anna St Ives, St Leon and Nature and Art in an attempt to convert readers to their particular version of reason and nature. Godwin's 'Necessity' could only come about by proseletysing; 'truth' had to be diffused. If it had not been for the Censorship Law of 1737 plays would have been written with the same aim as the novels, and by the very nature of the theatre their impact would have been more disturbing. Wordsworth's The Borderers was rejected by the Managers; but with its gang of robbers turned policemen it may well have been considered a hopeless risk with Larpent, who had blocked Schiller's play until it had been emasculated and made unrecognisable.

Because a revolution does not actually happen, it does not mean that it did not nearly happen. The conspiracy outcry of 1797-1800 was justified. There was a movement in Europe to win hearts and minds by speaking and writing, though it was never as cunningly organised as Robison's book suggests. And there were many writers in England working for a republic and a new order. Goethe, Schiller and even Kotzebue were the natural allies of these people because they suggested a rethinking of human relations.

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1. The Dramatic Censor lost no time. Reviewing Kotzebue's The Horse and the Widow in its first volume (1800), p.43, it wrote, ' a production remarkable only for its dullness, puerility and stale attempts at humour, which would disgrace the pen of a schoolboy. And yet there are writers and soi-disant critics in this country, who, in the plenitude of their arrogance and blunt zeal, have thought proper to baptize this self same Kotzebue by the name of the German Shakespeare'. It had been The Mirror which hailed Kotzebue with this title and a full page engraving of his portrait.

The Germans were therefore the legitimate targets of revolutionary counter attack. Ironically it was Kotzebue who did far more for the permissive cause than the other two dramatists, though he was soon to be an execrated villain to liberal activists. The reasons for his success in England when the others failed will be considered in the next chapter.

It is impossible at this distance to assess the mood of the Mirror's editor in floating the Schiller review, but at this time the periodical was markedly permissive in tone. In the same ninth volume as the last Schiller excerpt, it devoted nine pages to review and illustrate Godwin's St Leon.[1] This novel was an attack on wealth and social pretense, and a call for simple living, but its author, though still notorious for Political Justice, was falling from favour. The Mirror was giving him a very helpful fillip with this long article. But a rather more unexpected author featured in the same periodical in the previous year, 1799.

Superficially Salomon Gessner's renaissance in The Monthly Mirror is hard to account for.[2] It is true that he had never completely disappeared from English periodicals, but the sixties had been his heyday. Now in its twelve numbers for 1799 The Mirror printed no less than five of his Idyls, some, like Corydon and Menalchas, three or four pages long. The explanation is that Gessner's innocent yet amorous world of happy, classless shepherds and shepherdesses was always fashionable with revolutionaries. His neo-classical dream was not far from the ideal to which thinkers like Holbach and Godwin were striving. Though he chose to forget it, Coleridge had had a Gessner phase and, if he ever envisaged anything clearly, his pantisocracy on the banks of the Susequehanna would probably have been conceived

1. The Monthly Mirror (1800), ix, p.25.
2. Though a new translation of his Idyls had been published, Edinburgh 1798, in itself an indication of the work's power of survival.

as a Gessner-Theocritan enchantment.[1] It is to Gessner's Switzerland that Godwin's St Leon retires after he has wasted away his money.

So The Mirror is urging the ideal when it prints Gessner, surely the most unexceptionable of revolutionary proselytisers. The five Idyls in its eighth volume were: Amyntas, Carnation, Corydon and Menalcas, Daphne and Chloe and Menalcas and Alexis. Their emphasis, when they are not purveying a kind of ripe and trembling sexuality, is upon the sheer charm, even Necessity, of unselfish morality. The conclusion of Menalcas and Alexis will illustrate this triumph of educational environment and reason. Old Menalcas is spending his declining years in teaching his grandchildren rural arts, stories and songs. One day he finds young Alexis, who is only fourteen, brimming with mysterious tears. He presses him for an explanation. 'Alexis wiped the drops from his rosy cheeks, but his eyes brimmed with fresh tears - 'Oh! I know, yes I feel, that nothing is so sweet as doing good'. The boy tells how he has laid a pitcher of milk and a basket of fruit beside a lost and weary traveller as he slept exhausted. He then sits waiting for the refreshed wanderer to pass by so that he can offer yet more help.

> After refusing a long time, he gave me the burden,and I conducted him to the road that leads to his cottage. This,my father, is what makes me still weep for joy. What I did cost me little trouble; yet,every time I think on it, the remembrance delights me, like the sweet morning air. How happy must he be who has done a great deal of good! The old man embraced the youth, with the sweetest transport of pleasure. 'Ah! now I shall descend,without regret,to the grave; since I leave behind me,in my cottage, piety and beneficence!'[2]

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1. Coleridge actually described the site of the Pantisocratic Idyl in a Sonnet
   > .....I seek the cottage'd dell
   > Where virtue calm with careless step might stray,
   > And dancing to the moonlight roundelay
   > The wizard passions weave an holy spell.

   which is Arcadian enough.
2. The Monthly Mirror (1799), viii, p.80.

Piety, it should be noted, without a hint of Christian reference. Here Gessner, writing many years before Godwin, exactly captures Godwin's sense of confidence that, given the ideal surroundings, human beings are 'perfectible', that goodness is so natural to the species as to be almost a selfish delight and a subject for tears. Gessner's Idyls in their whole atmosphere deny the concept of original sin. They are an inspiration to liberal revolutionaries because their picture of Nature is NATURA NATURANS - things as they may become, not Burke's idea of Nature NATURA NATURATA - things as they have come to be. It is quite logical that the vogue for Gessner should span this whole forty year period because it was a period when thinkers in western Europe were obsessed by the notion of the human mind as a white sheet upon which anything good and constructive could be written if only a 'return' could be made to a state of 'Nature', an ideal environment. A tribe of ideal North American Indians was never likely to be as appealing an example to the educated mind as Gessner's classical shepherd land, suspended somewhere between Switzerland and Arcady. So Gessner, rather than any native English writer, preserves the tradition of the Eclogue as a political vehicle into the new century. He remains popular and acceptable when Schiller, stifled by censorship and handicapped by the violence of his own image, is beginning to decline.

After so much attention to reaction the translations themselves must be noticed.

The prevailing note in Tytler's Preface to The Robbers is its confidence. There are none of the usual apologies of the translator for his inadequacy or for the novelty of the original. Tytler believed that he was presenting Britain with a masterpiece, '... this performance will be found to possess a degree of merit that will intitle it to rank in the very first class of dramatical compositions ... The language too is bold and energetic, highly impassioned, and perfectly adapted to the expression of that sublimity

of sentiment which it is intended to convey'[1].

These are extraordinary claims, but by and large the critics of the decade took The Robbers at Tytler's valuation. This is perhaps Schiller's real force: that within a matter of months, an island culture, inclined in the past to isolated self satisfaction over drama, should admit a half known foreigner 'even to a degree of rivalship with our immortal Shakespeare'.[2] This is an unprecedented opening of horizons. In the past: dead Homer and dead Virgil as equals, but now a living Schiller in the same exalted role!

It is possible that this generosity of response points to a profound sense of contemporary poetic inadequacy in Britain. No one, reading the literary periodicals of the 1780s,can escape the haunting sense of regret as the rights and wrongs of the Chatterton affair are chewed over. Cowper was hardly an exhilerating national poet and Chatterton's genius often seems to be stressed because he was 'the big one that got away'.

Disturbingly the next decade, the 1790s, produced no single piece of sharp critical response to a Schiller translation or even, in the case of The Speculator, to Schiller originals. The reviews register the power and frenzy of this foreigner, quibble delicately about diction or the unities, then leave the reader to his or her internalised response. Coleridge in his sonnet to the author of The Robbers only expresses a wish to meet Schiller in a storm tossed wood so that he can 'weep aloud in a wild extasy'. Criticism becomes, in fact,uncritical. It is as if, after all their years of response to Shakespeare, English reviewers have no vocabulary to approach fiercely rhetorical prose employed in the service of amoral violence.

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1. The Robbers, translated by A.F. Tytler (London, 1792), p.viii-ix.
2. Critical Review, New Series (1792), vi, p.209.

In an age strung between Reason and ostentatious Pietism (for conventional Protestant piety is an often underestimated element of the times) it may not be surprising that critics are unsure how to react to amorality, particularly after Tytler has assured them that it 'is the principle of Fatalism, which pervades the whole piece, and influences the conduct of the chief agents in the drama'.[1] By a Calvinist distortion Charles de Moor's conduct can actually be considered moral.

> Believing himself an instrument of vengeance in the hand of the Almighty for the punishment of the crimes of others, he feels a species of savage satisfaction in thus accomplishing the dreadful destiny that is prescribed for him. Sensible, at the same time, of his own criminality in his early lapse from virtue, he considers himself as justly doomed to the performance of that part in life which is to consign his memory to infamy, and his soul to perdition. It will be allowed, that the imagination could not have conceived a spectacle more deeply interesting, more powerfully affecting to the mind of man, than that of a human being thus characterised, and acting under such impression.[2]

The most revealing phrase of this is 'a spectacle more deeply interesting', as this seems to be the level at which The Robbers was absorbed.

What is much more surprising is the lack of reaction to Tytler's prose. This may possibly be a fair approximation in English to Schiller's own style in German, as the Noehden and Stoddart translations of Fiesco and Don Carlos often sound as if written by the same hand. The style seems, for its time, truly innovative and vastly superior, in its easy union of rhetoric with the colloquial, to the stilted pseudo Shakespearian verse which contemporary English writers of tragedy were using.

Much later, an older and less creative Coleridge, writing in Biographia Literaria, was to analyse 'the true nature of the Robbers, and of the countless imitations which were its spawn', as being compounded from three

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1. The Robbers (London, 1792), p.x.
2. Ibid. p.xii-xiii.

English elements: 'the bloated style and peculiar rhythm of Hervey', 'the figurative metaphysics and solemn epigrams of Young', and 'the self-involution and dreamlike continuity of Richardson'.[1]

This is clever and withering, but Tytler's translation, though often spoilt by the unsubtle register of the robbers themselves with their staccato 'Thunder and lightning! Fire and fury!', 'By the forge of Pluto!' often rises in the set speeches to memorable free verse.

Moor's soliloquy on suicide in act four, set out in lines like poetry, has an expanding pattern which explains its power:

> If thou should'st give me a new earth,
> Where I alone inhabited,
> Companion of eternal night and silence,
> This mind, this active all-creative brain,
> Would people the hideous void with its own images -
> Would fill the vast of space with such chimera forms,
> That all eternity were scarce enough to unravel them.

after which it asserts its prosaic nature by breaking the prevailing iambic rhythm with:

> But perhaps it is by ever-varying scenes of misery in this ill world,
> That, step by step, thou leadst me to annihilation.[2]

This is far more flexible, and lucid, than Coleridge's blank verse in Wallenstein. After all the pedantic 18th century concern with the 'e's in past participles Tytler is quite unconcerned about colloquial forms like 'I'd' and 'I've'; this escape from preciously poetic register is a refreshment to literary language. What the text lacked in the passage just quoted, and what it usually lacks, is the fire of images. But even these sometimes come. Ranging over The Robbers, Fiesco and Don Carlos there is a definite leaven of lines which are memorable by their surge and their images, and this is what English poetry needed after a century of lines which reached the memorable only by their rhythm, rhyme and antithesis.

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1. Biographia Literaria, Macmillan (1926), p.359.
2. The Robbers (London, 1792), pp.163-164.

The following are not untypical:

> 'Languid as those faint traces which the memory bears of music that is past'. The Robbers, p.66.
>
> 'Blow your trumpets, I command you - I must have music to rouse my spirit from its lethargy'. The Robbers, p.162.
>
> 'Away! - for this unhappy Princess I will prepare a funeral so splendid that life shall lose its charms, and cold corruption shall glitter like a bride. Follow your Duke!' Fiesco (1796) p.217. Noehdens and Stoddart translation.
>
> 'I smelt out the business, waylaid the fellow in a narrow pass, dispatched the fox and brought the poultry hither'. Fiesco, p.125.
>
> 'Sovereign! What always sovereign, and majesty! - can I have no better answer than this perpetual empty echo - I strike this rock for water; - water to assuage my burning thirst - He gives me melted gold - Don Carlos (1798) Noehdens and Stoddart.

It is hard not to see such passages as an enrichment, even though both Wordsworth and Byron, when writing in the vein of Charles de Moor, lapsed back into the Shakespearian line. This is a pity because these translations, perhaps through picking up tricks of Schiller's style or perhaps incidentally through the mere accidental stylistic disturbance of translation,have often a hopeful and creative ring of a new poetic prose in their vigorous compression and paradox: "If my heart cannot appease thy insatiate passions, O Fiesco, the diadem will be still poorer."

Overwhelmed by the Shakespeare industry the British have never given their later poetic dramatists a fair chance. If the imaginative producers of the various national theatres spent as much care on Christopher Fry's plays as they do from time to time on thin things like 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona', or if they gave their prestige and talents to productions of plays by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Tennyson in the same measure that they flatter and piece out the various Parts of Henry VI then a whole balance of awareness would shift. Cut intelligently these first three Schiller plays would also be seen as a worthwhile episode in native English drama.

Since censorship prevented their performance in their time, their influence on the contemporary English stage was very slight. Wordsworth's

Borderers is their only real heir. Coleridge's Osorio shows traces of influence but the whole critical game of picking up borrowings from one play to another rests on such a mass of material as to be suspect.

There are hints of Wordsworth's attitude to Schiller in the cool, factual notes which he made after his conversations with Klopstock on the subject of German literature on 26 September 1798 at Klopstock's home:

> Schiller's Robbers he found so extravagant that he could not read it. I spoke of the scene of the setting sun. He did not know it. It was evident he knew little of Schiller's work, indeed he said he could not read them ... Schiller must soon be forgotten ... he gave himself up to the imitation of Shakespeare, who often was extravagant, but that Schiller was ten thousand times more so.[1]

Wordsworth was not impressed by Klopstock, who had just been devious, if not dishonest, about his debt to Milton. But it is apparent from this record that Wordsworth knew Schiller's translated works and it seems he mentioned the scene on the banks of the Danube in Act 3 of The Robbers hoping to elicit some admiration from the old German poet.

The Borderers is not a typical piece of Wordsworthian writing; consequently it has often been quarried for the influences of other authors; and clearly the theme of two men linked in mutual destruction, if not in mutual moral seduction, owes much to the Falkland-Williams axis of Godwin's Caleb Williams (1794). But it is reasonable to suggest that the Schiller-Tytler Robbers of 1792 is present behind Wordsworth's play in modest measure.

Caleb Williams has none of the theme of a good but flawed hero bound in loyalty to a band of followers. This surely was suggested

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1. The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, edited by W.J.B. Owen and J.W. Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1974), i, p.93.

by Karl Moor and his blood oath. Both plays end with the rejection of the followers by the leader and, in one measure or another, the rejection by the leader of a beloved woman. Wordsworth, through Fragment of a Gothic Tale 1791-95 and Guilt and Sorrow 1791-94 had been fascinated by the theme of a frail or blind old man in peril of heartless men and indifferent elements. At this stage in his writing the image seemed not to evoke pity or admiration in him but a sadistic urge to destroy. This urge he worked out fully in his extraordinary treatment of Matilda's old blind father, Herbert, in The Borderers. There is no greater paradox in Wordsworth's poetry than the way in which he puts Nature's benevolence to the test at this point, then makes her fail totally. When the kindly old man is left to the wild moorlands without a guide not only does he fall, bloody and broken, to a slow painful death but when he is discovered by a peasant, who could reasonably have saved him, the peasant leaves him to die moaning and alone. Thus everything which Wordsworth later claimed to trust: Nature and those brought up in contact with Nature, proves false.

How far Wordsworth was inspired to write like this by the slow destruction of the old Count Moor in The Robbers must be speculation. But the scene that stirred Coleridge most was that where Karl meets his old father, broken and pitiful by the ruined tower in the forest and, whatever the actual circumstances of the plots, both plays depend for large sections on the sufferings of an old man for their dramatic tension.

By an oddity of editorial policy Wordsworth's original Borderers, the M.S.A. and M.S.B. texts of 1797, have still never been published. The play, as he intended it in his youthful wildness and half despair, has to be unravelled from confusing footnotes to the 1847 text, which Wordsworth prepared in Tory old age to cover his Radical youth. Mortimer

of 1797 has far more of Tytler's text than Marmaduke of 1847. Schiller's play works frequently on the idea of men corrupting each other with some relish. Francis corrupts his father and, indirectly, his brother Karl. Karl himself corrupts and is corrupted by his band of robbers, particularly by Spiegelberg. In the scene on the Danube bank, which Wordsworth noted particularly, the young Kozinski and Karl discuss together the way that they have been turned against society by injustices and how they have retreated into destructive violence. ' Here thou withdraw'st thyself at once from the circle of humanity'. Karl says, pointing to his robbers, 'man thou must be, or devil'.[1] In Act 5 of The Borderers the 1797 B text has a long scene[2] when Mortimer and Rivers gloat, no other word can be used, over the fact that Mortimer is now more proficient in evil than Rivers, his teacher. The later 1847 texts lose almost all the force of this.

The early text has a stage direction 'Mortimer and Rivers mutually fasten their eyes on each other for some time'. Then Mortimer says 'I am a man again'. 'Nay something more', Rivers replies and pointing to where old Herbert lies, 'Dead', he adds. Mortimer's only response is 'Quiet'. The exchange continues:

Rivers:	As his best friends could wish: and you?
Mortimer:	Almost as quiet.
Rivers:	So I prophesised; we are then friends?
Mortimer:	I am the friend of all men.
Rivers:	Of me especially.
Mortimer:	Why yes!
Rivers:	A pledge

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1. Schiller, The Robbers (London, 1792), p.121.
2. The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, edited by De Selincourt, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1940), i, pp.220-223.

Mortimer: Here is my hand - the hue of a pure lily,
A lady hand - none of your crimson spots.
Not the less welcome - eh?

Rivers: Most noble - the starts and sallies of our last encounter -

Mortimer: Mere foolish freaks!

Rivers: Bravo! the vessels cleared -
That pestilential weight of heaven known what,
Those bundles packed some thousand years ago,
Are plunged into the sea.

Mortimer: Even so

Rivers: And you are happy?

Mortimer: Never so happy.[1]

This rejection of Christianity and open delight in evil has the tone of the great exchange between Spiegelberg and Karl in Act 1 of The Robbers that ends in Karl's

> So, now! - The scales drop from my eyes! What a fool I was to think of returning to my cage! My soul thirsts for action, my spirit pants for libery! - Robbers and assassins! With those words I set all laws at defiance! Man had no humanity when I appealed to humanity! Pity and compassion! here let me throw you off for ever! - I have no father - no affection more! Come Death and Murder be my masters! and teach me to forget that this heart e'er knew what fondness was! Come to my soul, ye fiends, Now for some horrible exploit.[2]

In both episodes a good man has been seduced to a state of nihilistic violence. The only difference is that Schiller's character opens the play; Wordsworth's character closes it. Rivers, the teacher of evil, points uneasily to Herbert's corpse saying 'Sickly and blind!'. Then

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1. Poetical Works of Wordsworth (Oxford, 1940), i, p.221-22.
2. Schiller, The Robbers (London, 1792), p.48-9.

for the first time Mortimer takes the commanding lead that Karl Moor took so much earlier:

Mort: Drugged, betrayed and starved!
But what of that? If I sent him to his grave
'Twas nothing more than darkness, deepening darkness
And crowning all the impotence of death
I am, you see, an apt proficient (Rivers starts)

Riv: Hell!

Even if Wordsworth's remarkable and experimental play could never have passed the net of Larpent, at least the exercise and the exhilerating self exploration of writing the text gave his verse a pace and freedom it never had before, and that, at least, may be his indirect debt to Schiller. It is perhaps worth noting that, for all the violence and swagger of Schiller's play, Wordsworth's probably exceeds it in the general weight of lines spent exploiting actual cruelty, and Schiller's play has the more positive, even hopeful, conclusion. Karl Moor leaves his earldom to his followers and the reward for his capture to a poor man. Mortimer's last speech in the B text is not even penitent, only coldly despairing:

No prayers, no tears, but hear my doom in silence.
I will go forth a wanderer on the earth
A shadowy thing, and as I wander on
No human ear shall ever hear me speak
No human dwelling ever give me food
Or sleep or rest, and all the uncertain way
Shall be as darkness to me, as a waste
Unnamed by man! and I will wander on
Living by mere intensity of thought
A being by pain and thought compelled to live
Yet loathing life till heaven in mercy strike me
With blank forgetfulness - that I may die.[1]

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1. Poetical Works p.224.

As Bertrand Evans pointed out in Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley[1] the wave of German themes in drama did not hit the living English stage until 1798 and when it did it only, for the most part, sent back to England the Gothic themes of dungeons, ghosts and wicked knights which it had borrowed from English Gothic novels in the previous two decades.[2]

The whole business of genres: Ritter-, Räuber- and Schauerromane is an academic attempt to impose order upon a lively natural tangle of pilfering and adapting. Bertrand Evans, seeking a Räuberromane genre in England after Tytler's 1792 translation, makes much of Boaden's adaptation from Mrs Radcliffe , The Sicilian Romance 1794 where the hero Lindor becomes captain of a group of robbers. But this thematic development is only achieved by ignoring Holcroft's Noble Peasant, ten years earlier in 1784, with its hero Leonard and his group of Saxon outlaws. Leonard and his men play a much more prominent role in the drama than Boaden's Lindor, and, shaped by Holcroft's prejudice against the aristocracy, they side, at least vaguely, with goodness and justice.

The quest for influences depends upon which of an enormous stock of plays and novels has been read by the researcher. The Noble Peasant is not in Bertrand Evan's book list and he virtually ignores the French exploration of the Gothic genre in the 1760s and even earlier. Striving to find some elements in 'German' Gothic drama which are actually German and not English re-exports Evans writes:

> But we have not met the devils, the black magic, the tribunal, the evil monk, the enchanted wands, the phosphorescent glow and the magic mirror. When these began appearing in English plays (most notably in those of Lewis), they made up that "improvement" of which Coleridge wrote.[3]

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1. Bertrand Evans, Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley, (Univ. of California, 1947), the relevant chapter is seven.
2. Though the only true original motif, the Vehmgericht, had been adopted two years earlier, 1796, in J.Boaden's 'The Secret Tribunal'.
3. B. Evans, Gothic Drama, p.123.

In fact the evil monk was an established figure thirty years earlier. In Longsword Earl of Salisbury 1762, and consequently in Hartson's 1767 play is 'a monk called Reginald whose mind but ill suited his profession, or his residence in a seat of piety', whose brethren, 'suffered him to disgrace and disturb their house by scandalous excesses, utterly subversive of holy discipline and order. Drunkenness and riot, and lewdness had oftentimes profaned their walls with impunity'.[1] William Hutchinson's novel of 1772 The Hermitage has not only an Abbot, Father Peter whose 'pale visage and hollow eyes expressed avarice and envy' and who 'had hardened his soul with every severity of superstition'[2], but it features the actual Rosicrucian symbol of the Rosy Cross, made of glowing onyx and shedding drops of blood at warning moments, as when Father Peter is gliding up to stab the hero. So the German innovations are only 'baroque' modifications of the Gothic genre.

Moving in a period when most drama on the London stage was amusing trivia and when many of the German sounding plays like The Captive of Spilburg are not German at all, it is necessary to keep clearly in mind the real German contribution to the English theatre. It was, quite simply, seriousness.

Schiller's plays are serious. They do not open with a fat Friar and a jester joking about who stole the goose pie, or break off a chase in a dungeon to discuss whether it is better to be married for fifty years or hung for half an hour. Schiller deals with the problem of inhumanity and frustrated love; he considers the responsibilities of power and its corrupting force; he expresses motivation in its genuine complexity. In essence this was why he was censored from the English

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1. Thomas Leland, Longswood Earl of Salisbury (London, 1762), p.2.
2. William Hutchinson, The Hermitage (London, 1772), p.5.

stage; so it is of real importance that, in the closet at least, English intellectuals could see that another country had a mature playwright who used language with innovatory force and treated his fellow men as thinking adults. The theatre in England in the first ten years of the Revolutionary War was superficial. It was superficial because the ruling classes were frightened. Even unacted, Schiller's plays were an antidote to silliness.

Towards the end of the period, with much 'moral' protest but huge popular response, there was a limited treatment of real social problems on the stage and once again the force for maturity was German. Kotzebue was that force and he requires a separate chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

Kotzebue - author and phenomenon.

'The Author is not ashamed to confess that while he was writing this piece he shed a thousand tears."

Preface. The Negro Slaves

In a period when Goethe was a failure in England and Schiller was not licensed on the public stage, the absent figures are sometimes more significant than those present. By all reasonable hindsight this chapter should be devoted to the place of Lessing on the English stage. Though recently dead, he was such a major influence in German drama, mentioned in English periodicals of the eighties and translated when Schiller was unknown, that he should have had a flowering time in England in the nineties. He was given his chance.

Emilia Galotti was staged at Drury Lane on Oct 28, 1794,[1] the dresses and scenery were new, J.P. Kemble played the Duke, Mrs Siddons played Countess Orsina. There could have been no better launching for the German Theatre. It ran for three nights, the receipts were down to £182 on the last performance from £317 on the first; then it was withdrawn. Genest declared that 'it deserved a better fate', but he probably puts his finger on the major flaw in this and most German tragedies of the period as far as English audiences were concerned: it did not have a happy ending, 'the catastrophe might perhaps be altered for the better - as it now stands it rather excites disgust than pity'. In the ending, of course, Odoarto Galotti kills his daughter at her own request to save her from

1. Translated by the Rev. Joseph Berrington and so disregarded that it was never published even in a single edition, while Colman the Younger's trivial Battle of Hexham went through five.

a sexual disaster. Interestingly Mrs Siddons sidestepped the dangerous role and played the Duke's discarded mistress. Apparently the language of the play, which shines so brightly in Maty's short translation[1], made no appeal, and the plot confirmed the worst English fears that German writers were immoral in the Werter sense of the word.

So the triumphs and the popularity went to Kotzebue, just four years later, at the same theatre and with the same two stars in the chief roles of The Stranger. This time there was a fourth night and the receipts were £519, one hundred pounds more than the first night, and the play was launched on an acting history which would continue until at least 1891.[2]

Kotzebue has such a rich record of performance and publication in this country that it will be helpful to begin with a list of his plays which were translated between 1796 and 1800. Their titles are given in German with the English title of at least one of the translations after it. Often there were three translations of one play in a year. Plays which were given a public performance are marked with an asterisk.

1796	Die Negersklaven	The Negro Slaves.
	Die Indianer in England	The Indians in England by A. Thomson.
1797	No translations	
1798	Adelheid von Wulfingen	Adelaide of Wulfingen by B. Thompson.
	Graf Benyowsky*	Count Benyowski by Render.
	Das Kind der Liebe*	Lovers' Vows by Mrs Inchbald.
	Menschenhass und Reue*	The Stranger by B. Thompson.
	Der Graf von Burgund*	The Count of Burgundy by Ann Plumptre.

1. Maty's New Review, IX (1786), p.40 and p.124.
2. When it was played at The Olympic with Wilson Barrett as Meinau. For this and many other facts about Kotzebue's plays I am indebted to L.F. Thompson's Kotzebue, a Survey of his progress in France and England, (Paris, 1928).

1799	Die Wittwe und das Reitpferd*	The Widow and the Horse by T. Dibden.
	Versöhnung*	The Birthday by T. Dibdin.
	Armut und Edelsinn*	Poverty and Nobleness of Mind by Maria Geisweiler.
	Die edle Lüge	The Noble Lie by Maria Geisweiler.
	Die Silberne Hochzeit*	The Happy Family by B. Thompson.
	Die Corsen	The Corsicans.
	False Scham	False Shame.
	La Perouse*	La Peyrouse by B. Thompson and by A. Plumptre
1799	Die Opfertod*	Family Distress.
	Das Schreibpult*	Wise Men of the East by Mrs Inchbald.
	Die Sonnenjungfrau*	The Virgin of the Sun by both Thompson and Plumptre.
	Rollas Tod*	Pi zarro Sheridan and others.
	Üble Laune	The Peevish Man by C. Ludger.
	Die Verläumder	Force of Calumny by A. Plumptre.
	Der Wildfang*	Of age tomorrow by T. Dibdin.
1800	Joanna von Monfaucon*	Joanna by R. Cumb erland

Kotzebue in England is a fascinating but elusive study. The literary substance at the centre of it is indeterminate, largely because so many people tried their hand at shaping his plays for the English stage while no one managed to make him their absolute property. So it is tempting to think of him as a phenomenon rather than a writer, a piece of sociological witness rather than a playwright. It is very easy to start studying his popularity rather than his plays, and then, in a kind of paradox so often associated with Kotzebue, to begin studying the leaden weight of unpopularity which has hung over him since his death at the hands of the student Sand.

For there are a number of other paradoxes around his work. Only

three of his fifteen plays acted before 1800 were hugely popular, they quite overshadow the other twelve. It is arguable that these three are far from being his most effective plays in translation and that the most interesting in modern eyes, The Negro Slaves, was never considered for the theatre, though it has great qualities. Of the three that became famous money spinners at Drury Lane or Covent Garden, two, The Strangers, and Lovers' Vows, are of an almost wholly different genre, sentimental dramas with happy endings, to the third, Pizarro, which was a conventional historical spectacular with a tragic, or perhaps 'glorious', conclusion.

The contradictions continue. It was not usually the 'best' translation in any sense, literary or dramatic, which brought the greatest success in the theatre, often, in fact, it was the worst. A translator who succeeded once never hit the right note again. The actors and actresses themselves, in one of the vintage periods of theatrical history, were a potent and shifting pattern of influences behind what was played and what succeeded. Lastly the critics were a disaster, usually hopelessly wrong on the first night and afterwards either rapturising over an acting performance or sermonising about moral propriety.

In the end there is the suspicion that we are discussing an event of entertainment hysteria, like that associated with Rudolph Valentino in the twenties or the Beatles in the sixties. But Kotzebue was never a physical presence like these last two; though even here a number of 'Lives' of Kotzebue were published to satisfy what must have been a thirst for some kind of personal contact.[1]

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1. These were:-
(London, 1800) Sketch of the Life and Career of Augustus von Kotzebue 'with the Journal of his tour to Paris at the close of the year 1790,' A. Plumptre.
(London, 1802) The most remarkable year in the life of Augustus von Kotzebue 'containing an account of his exile into Siberia,' translated by E. Beresford.
(London, 1806) Travels through Italy in the years 1804 and 1805.
(London, 1814) Narrative of a journey into Persia.

To consider the influence of translations from the German in England it is important to decide whether the English theatre in the nineties was simply a void which any exotic foreign dramatist could have filled. The fact that five of Iffland's plays were translated at this time,[1] yet none of them were acted, suggests that it was not as simple as this. Had then, any of Kotzebue's plays outstanding qualities of language, characterisation, moral message, plot development or stage craft?

The answer to that must be yes, with the reservation that his best translation was apparently never even considered for the stage.

In 1796 the German theatre could point to no real successes on a British stage, so it seems likely that the unknown translator of The Negro Slaves published it essentially as a closet play, hoping to win supporters for Wilberforce and anti-slavery. It is dedicated to Wilberforce; and the good brother in the play, William, actually mentions him to the slaves: 'There lives a man in England who loves you, who is day and night meditating your relief, and who, warmed with the glorious fire of philanthropy, defends your rights with fervid eloquence.'[2]

This leaden piece of rhetoric is not a fair sample of the play, but William, though essential as a foil, is the weakest of the characters. It is necessary to be cautious when offering to discover a lost and unregarded masterpiece of the theatre, there is usually a good acting reason why it has remained unregarded. But, after every due caution, The Negro Slaves does seem an astonishing piece of theatre for its time: a cross between Brecht and Peter Terson with half the lines written by Firbank.

The plot is an application of the Gothic villain to Jamaica. John,

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1. The Nephews (Die Mündel) 1799, The Foresters (Die Jäger) 1799, The Lawyers (Die Advocaten) 1799, The Batchelors (Die Hagestolzen) 1799, Crime from Ambition (Verbrechen aus Ehrfurcht) 1800.
2. Augustus von Kotzebue, Negro Slaves (London, 1796), p.60-61.

the wicked brother, is a planter who encourages his overseer to be brutal to his slaves. William the good brother, tries to stop him by buying the most deserving slaves and freeing them. John lusts quite openly after one negress Ada and has given her a fortnight before she must share his bed. In this time she discovers her lost husband Zameo. Zameo and his father Ayos, who deliberately chose slavery in order to be reunited with his son, have been freed by William but John refused to sell Ada.

Then follow two endings. The first, printed in major type,is happy: John relents, Ada and Zameo are united. The second ending, printed in small type,is an Emilia Galotti solution. At her own pleading Zameo stabs Ada to death, then, breathing defiance, kills himself.

At the lowest, journalistic, level the play works magnificently. Ayos's account of the journey over in the slave ship is harrowing and thoroughly researched. As social drama with a message there was nothing like it on the English stage, and if just one manager had had a social conscience or the nerve to experiment it would have caused a sensation and, quite probably, ended the slave trade. A negro woman tells how she was treated when she was too ill to carry heavy pans at the sugar press:

> See,how he scourged me, see how the scars of the whip extend from my neck quite down,over my breast - And whenever after I wished to give milk to my child, there came out blood - Two days did my poor child live upon blood, which it sucked from the swellings, and it cried so pitiably - (smiling) - Now it cries no more·····I then drove a nail into its heart - It did not cry - It just moved once - and see, it is dead.[1]

This is only one of the horrors : stories are told, in wry dignified prose, of negroes who cut off their right hands rather than lash their brothers, and of negroes forbidden to carry a stick for self defence, who are then bitten by mad dogs and die raving. The play is a prodigy

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1. Kotzebue, Negro Slaves (London, 1796), p.53.

in the way it builds up an overwhelmingly black world, with just two whitemen (for the overseer never seems white) surrounded by dignified yet alien suffering. Here, if anywhere, is the beginning of that binary liberal compassion, half sympathy, half gloating, which has since become almost a mediumin itself.

But this is not all. Only the good William is overwhelmed by the exotic richness of the plot, everywhere else characterisation survives. There is no vestige of condescension in Kotzebue's writing of the negro parts. They are, naturally, Rousseau's noble savages, but they convince. Truro's 'light relief' part is bitter and telling, the women have an appealing feckleness and gaiety in their misery. The opening dialogue between Ada and Lilli is deliberately written in heightened prose to set the tone for the negroes throughout the play:

> Lilli. So much the worse! Dreams are the best gifts to man in this world.
>
> Ada. Thou art very right. My sleep is one continued dream of him! Unfortunate me!···Rest is a stranger in my chamber.
>
> Lilli. Love and Rest are a couple of children who quarrel every moment at their play - or rather, Love only is the child; Rest is an old man whom the wild boy plucks by the beard.
>
> Ada. Happy girl! to whom the laughing side of everything presents itself.[1]

What is even more unexpected is that poetry, of a decadent relish, is put into John, the villain's, speeches. Gothic villains are usually given some poetic remorse, but his lines brim with elegant malice and he is allowed to win all the exchanges with his good brother, who is as much fascinated as horrified by what he hears. 'I once made a wild girl so tame!' John boasts.

'How?' asks William, waiting to be shocked.

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1. Kotzebue, Negro Slaves (London, 1796), p.2-3.

'I had her whole body pricked with needles; then cotton dipped in oil was twisted round her fingers,and lighted - Three days after she loved me most tenderly.'[1]

An exchange which the sultry, mocking Lilli picks up later to tease John with. And, when he is sexually pressuring Ada, later in the play, she tells him that Zameo will always have her heart. At that point in a normal Gothic exchange the villain usually storms out fuming, but John, the unrepentant sensualist, replies in an almost Restoration vein, though again with poetry:

> E'en keep your heat for Zameo. The habitation of the heart is in a castle of the air, it feeds on the perfume of flowers,and intoxicates itself with dew; sun, moon,and stars are its confidants, but the earth is a stranger to it. In short,it was never created for this world or for me. But you possess another jewel, personal charms visible to my eyes, sensible to my feelings; a jewel which you may dispose of without your heart. This may remain Zameo's property; but I bought the other with money, and yet my generosity makes me a petitioner for it.[2]

where the switch of register after 'stranger to it', then again after 'with money' is masterly.

Here, if there had been an audience to deserve it, was a play that could have changed the writing fashions of the decade. Yet even 'Monk' Lewis, with his own sugar plantation in Jamaica, showed no interest in producing a version of it complete with a comic black butler and a praying ju-ju mammy.

It is interesting to speculate whether it could have been effectively cast and staged in London. Sheridan managed the Peruvians, but they had armies and spectacle on their side. This play abounds in tense personal exchanges, ruthless sexuality and horrors recounted in unsparing detail. Though there are songs and dances they come naturally from the action and

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1. Kotzebue, Negro Slaves (London, 1796), p.12.
2. Ibid, p.113.

never give excuses for lavish staging. Finally, the happy ending is very improbable and the sad ending would have worked much better. Probably actors at any period can rise to any challenge. It would have been the audiences, if anything, which would have defeated The Negro Slaves. What would have happened when the relentless escapism of English theatregoers was faced with this unflattering view of the British abroad?

There can be no answer, but the play does prove that Kotzebue as presented by English translators was innovative, high minded and prurient; which is the kind of paradox he seems to exude. For all the 'thousand tears' he claims to have shed as he wrote the play there is an unmistakable gloating in his handling of defenceless female flesh. The play is a preparation for the emancipated handling of the fallen woman theme, The Stranger and Lover s' Vows. This union of high mindedness and lewd relish is a central hypocrisy in the Kotzebue translations which must account for their enormous appeal to the type of theatre goer who liked to feel both high minded and yet titillated. It also accounts for the outrage of some of their critics. It is quite true that the plays perform moral tricks on their audiences and lure them into sympathising with a 'vice', as they would have called it, by being infinitely sensitive about suffering. There is this central corruption in the core of all sympathy for misery: that there is an element of enjoyment at seeing a state you are not obliged directly to share. Kotzebue seems, by his translated plays, to have perceived this, used it,and, to that extent,left a nation a degree more self indulgent, corrupted even:

> Emprison her soft hand and let her rave
> And feed deep deep upon her peerless eyes.

Anyone who has read The Negro Slaves will find it difficult afterwards to take any of the attitudes which Kotzebue strikes at their face value. His sincerity is tempestuous but it has no depth. He manipulates an audience calculatingly.

The other play of 1796 The Indians in England is a lightweight and must have been translated to indulge the British in the subtle flattery of being gently insulted by whimsical foreigners. The exiled Nabob of Mysore and his daughter Gurli are living in Portsmouth and the comedy depends entirely upon the interplay of Indian and English manners. It was never attempted in the theatre probably because of the problem of Gurli. She is of an acting type which Kotzebue enjoyed creating; Amelia in the original version of Lovers' Vows was similar, which was why Mrs Inchbald rewrote the part. Amelia originally proposed directly to Anholt the chaplain. Gurli, ignorant of European manners,is able to be even more direct. When she is being pressed to marry the predatory Samuel she asks, 'Why then must it be a man? I will marry his sister Liddy!' And when she is signing the contract with Samuel and sees Robert, the other brother, she declares, 'I like brother Robert better than brother Samuel!' and drops him. This is farce, and apparently Kotzebue had a very gifted naïf actress, Frau Adamberger, who could carry this kind of role. The English seem to have been more mannered in their acting styles, but it is surprising to note the degree of outrage in Mrs Inchbald's account of Kotzebue's original Amelia: 'the forward and unequivocal manner in which she announces her affection to her lover, in the original, would have been revolting to an English audience ... I have endeavoured to attach the attention and sympathy of the audience by whimsical insinuations rather than coarse abruptness'.

This is a timely reminder that Jane Austen is about to enter the kingdom of manners, and Austen's view of Kotzebue is known from Mansfield Park. The English repertory of plays before Kotzebue's invasion seems such a rough and ready collection of manners that it is easy to overlook its basic propriety and to miss the slight but definite expansion of permissiveness which Kotzebue won for the English theatre by making

fallen women the heroines, under the device of pity and sympathy. As the pious critics remark, once you sympathise with a 'vice' you begin to tolerate it. Schiller was well aware of this softening power of the Stage. In his essay 'What are the particular effects of the Stage?' he writes: 'As I grow older, my catalogue of bad men becomes with each day less - my register of fools longer and more complete. If all the moral faults of the one sex spring from the same fountain, all the monstrous extremes of vice which have ever been branded with infamy be solely different modifications, higher degrees of the same property, which we all, in the end, with one accord, laugh at, and love; wherefore should nature take another course with the other sex'.[1]

The reactionary counter revolution against German drama was totally justified from the right wing point of view, but it was unsuccessful. Kotzebue's plays continued to be put on, popularising the notion of forgiveness, fraying the edges of intolerance.[2] East Lynn and all the Victorian feeling for fallen women, with Gladstone himself walking the West End to seek them out and help them, descend from this warm prurient curiosity.

Sellier in Kotzebue in England considers that The Negro Slaves established Kotzebue's reputation in England. L.F. Thompson doubts this, and with reason. This play and The Indians in England were both unactable, the first by reason of unsympathetic audience potential, the second probably by the limitations of actresses. So neither play pointed to Kotzebue as a goldmine for managers. Then in 1797 there were no translations from Kotzebue, a significant pause. What then accounts for the decision

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1. Examined in the previous chapter, Monthly Mirror, VIII (1799), p.360.
2. Boaden in his Memoirs of Mrs Siddons (London, 1827) expresses the reactionary view point very precisely, 'speaking of Mrs Siddons's Mrs Haller performance he writes, 'I do not deny the interest which it excited, for I admit it to have been powerful in the extreme; but I have always thought the sympathy of my fair countrywomen in this case dangerous to their best interests', p.322, vol. 1.

of Drury Lane to try out The Stranger with its most prestigious cast on Saturday 24th March 1798?

Benjamin Thompson put his translation of the play, not into the hands of Sheridan, who had already ignored two previous translations of the same play, one by Papendick and the other by Schink, but into the hands of Mr Grubb who was one of Sheridan's co-Governors of Drury Lane. Grubb had occasionally to be humoured because of his money and his shares, so this time Sheridan read the play. Examination of Drury Lane's repertory of plays in the Spring of this year suggests an overweight of Shakespeare, of spectaculars and of comedy. Bluebeard and The Castle Spectre were reliable money spinners and Hamlet was permanently profitable, but there was no new play of feeling. This, as well as his desire to oblige Grubb, may have swayed Sheridan, but it is notable that the play was being offered to him for a third time. It would, also, have been cheap to put on, as regards cast and sets, and there was a place for a song with words by Sheridan himself.

Though the play is a cunningly contrived acting vehicle, all contemporary accounts agree that the acting was quite above the ordinary level. The Monthly Mirror is not effusive about the script: 'The interest we feel for principal personages enables us to endure with tolerable patience the insipidity and insignificance of many long scenes', but says, 'the Acting would alone make it popular, if its merits were even less striking than they are', and of J.P. Kemble's Stranger: 'describe it we cannot' it 'mocks every attempt at panegyric'.[1]

Boaden tells how Kemble prepared himself psychologically for the part: 'he relapsed from his usual kindness into gloomy abstraction;

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1. The Monthly Mirror, V (1798, April), p.234.

and admirably neat as he was in general, I saw some days a carelessness about his person ! On stage his intensity and study was such that he triumphed in single words and phrases. His 'forgive me', to Francis, 'was his whole history conveyed in two short words ', and when his former friend greeted him with an affectionate, 'Charles!' his rejoinder, 'Steinfort!' ' was equally removed from either surprise or joy; all emotions but of one class had died away, and he bore in that a living death about him.'[1] Writing twenty seven years later Boaden is still moved by the way Kemble ripped up Mrs Haller's confession of infidelity and, 'let them escape rather than threw them from his hands'.

So one of the initial reasons for Kotzebue's success must have been the legend that grew up around the acting, a performance which everyone felt they had to see, even if it were morally distasteful.

This is where Kotzebue's own part in the success comes in. The play is so written as to involve the audience of the time almost into the action. The play lived on the controversy which it aroused. The emotions are hard to recreate but the written evidence of them abounds.

The Mirror perceived the dramatic truth, yet became helplessly involved in the pattern of emotions which Kotzebue set up. 'The reunion of a couple so situated is not desirable ... though it would do violence to our feelings, the death of Mrs Haller is an event,that ought, by some means or other, to take place', but then allows that Sheridan, 'if he killed Mrs Haller, he must kill the audience too'.[2]

The remarkable fact about this review is that here is an Englishman asking for an unhappy ending and a German refusing it. This is the reverse

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1. Boaden, Memoirs of J.P. Kemble, 2 vols. (London, 1825), ii, p.210-16.
2. The Monthly Mirror, V (1798, April), p.232.

of the Emilia Galotti and Robber stories; and it cannot be a coincidence that this is the first real German success on an English stage. If Kotzebue is building up audience involvement to such a pitch that they want death and forgiveness simultaneously then his moral impact, desirable or undesirable, must be great, and the dramatic experience seems to be a new one.

Boaden is unable, even in retrospect, to forget his revulsion at Mrs Siddons's playing of Mrs Haller. He analyses at length the turpitude of the part she plays, 'she has born him the pledges of their mutual love', 'here are profusion in a husband's difficulty, and adultery without passion; two features of depravity, that pronounce the head and the heart of woman utterly worthless'.[1] For all this shame to be borne by Mrs Siddons was a crime of sensibility.

> Her countenance, her noble figure, her chaste and dignified manners were so utterly at variance with the wretched disclosure she had to make, that no knowledge that it was pure, or rather, impure, fiction, could reconcile me to this 'forcible feeble'; that which was true of the character, was so evidently false and impossible of its grand and beautiful representative.[2]

The natural nobility of Mrs Siddons's presence is manifest in the Reynolds portrait, and Sheridan's perverse casting of her as a loose woman, both in this play and in Pizarro, seems to have been a major factor in the success of both plays. The men, at least, in the audience seem to have been torn between admiration and outrage. It was a manager's device which Kotzebue himself might have enjoyed. In literary retrospect it is ironical to see what a source of disgust Kotzebue is able to tap when he uses this theme of a wife's chastity. In Restoration drama it was used monotonously as a standard joke, but now, a hundred years later, one feeble adultery can be the plot of an entire play and the reconciliation

1. Boaden, Kemble (London, 1825), ii, 212, 214.
2. Boaden, Memoirs of Mrs Siddons, 2 vols. (London, 1827), i, 324.

has to be approached with infinite care. In one sense it is a triumph for the refined Sensibility, but in another, more subtle, way it is the start of a long process of encroachment upon the Protestant middle class conscience, which will end with the whole structure of morality, if not actually in ruins, at least questioned on every issue, and all by the Kotzebuean device of sympathy. Collier ended the licence of Restoration drama; now, not with any open defiance, but under a cover of tears, suffering and penance, a foreigner is beginning to restore that licence. This is the essential of German influence in this decade.

Amid the general reaction of admiring disapproval the liberal periodical The Analytical Review was shrewdly perceptive, but first it claimed Kotzebue as a protegé: 'we have had occasion repeatedly to introduce the author of our reader's attention'. It stressed his 'felicity in the choice of subjects', he, 'has seized a subject, obvious, yet neglected by all his predecessors'. So there was awareness of the absolute innovation of the theme. The review then outlined the plot: 'a repentant adultress laments her crime in solitude', 'the husband sinks a prey to a gloomy misanthropy'. 'This couple reside, unknown to each other, in the same village. They see each other by accident, and meet by design, to take a solemn farewell. C'est tout! Yet from this single incident, simple as it is ... the liveliest sympathy arises'.[1]

The review merits quotation because it underlines the amazing economy of the plot, particularly when The Stranger is compared with the average complex plotting of the time. Only the last remark is acid: 'perhaps, the author should rather be envied for his success than applauded for his talent'. This does raise a point. Granted that the play chooses a subject which no one before had had wit to seize, how much 'talent'

1. The Analytical Review XXIX, (1799), p.258, misprint for 528.

is there in the writing?

This is where an unavoidable vagueness settles around Kotzebue's works in their English versions. Behind so many self confident translators how much of the wit, the dialogue, or even the scene arrangement are his? Were they popular on the London stage only to the extent that they had been reshaped into prevailing English dramatic conventions while retaining their 'daring' plots?

As Benjamin Thompson renders The Stranger it is very much an actor's play, and sometimes a ham actor's. 'Rid me of that babbler', orders the Stranger as Peter pursues his homely humour, and then the stage direction: 'Throws himself on a seat, takes from his pocket Zimmerman (sic) on Solitude and reads'.[1] Later, as the Countess enters:

Countess. 'Don't you think William much grown?'

Mrs Haller. 'Sweet boy'. (She stoops to kiss him, and deep melancholy overshadows her countenance).

Often the length of the stage directions indicates the demands on the actors: 'Mrs Haller casts her eye upon the ground and contends against the confusion of an exalted soul, when surprised in a good action. The Baron stands opposite to her, and from time to time casts a glance at her in which his heart is swimming'. But The European Magazine made the interesting complaint that there were too many occasions when only two persons were on the stage. This is, in fact, a strength of Kotzebue that he does write confrontations when two people actually show that they have minds and that the minds are making progress not just delivering vapid chat. These confrontations were a feature of The Negro Slaves but The Stranger has its share of this mature writing:

Baron. 'Who told you to marry a thoughtless inexperienced girl? One scarce expects established principles at five and twenty in a man, yet you require them in a girl of sixteen!'[2]

Stranger. 'What is this principle which we call honour? Is it a feeling

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1. Kotzebue, trans. B. Thompson, The Stranger (London, 1806), p.11, p.13, p.29, p.27.
2. Ibid. p.67-68.

of the heart,or a quibble in the brain?'

When Mrs Inchbald, confident that she knew her public, reshaped Das Kind der Liebe into Lovers' Vows she deliberately cut the best one-to-one scene, between the French Count and Wildenhain, right out of the play, supposing that the English would not sit through a discussion of hypocrisy and cold heartedness. But it survives in Ann Plumptre's earnest translation The Natural Son. Such scenes make greater demands on actors and on audiences but The Stranger demonstrated how movingly both could respond.

If there is any villain in this account of Kotzebue in England it is Mrs Inchbald. Benjamin Thompson, failed law student, failed merchant, failed Merino sheep farmer, had spent several years in Germany,including the important ones 1797-1799, and his translations are workmanlike. Ann Plumptre, an intense woman who, according to Crabb Robinson, would have liked the French revolution to spread to England, was conscientious in her translation and almost idolatrous in her reverence for Kotzebue,[1] she retains everything, to an impractical length. But Mrs Inchbald, with years of playwriting behind her and familiar with all the theatrical figures of the past, simply took a rough translation from a German native and hacked it as she pleased. Her Lovers' Vows at Covent Garden was as popular as The Stranger which it was deliberately staged to rival. But is success is its only importance because that proved that the public taste was broadening and that there was an appetite in London audiences

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1. Kotzebue, The Natural Son, (London, 1798), p.82. Translated by Ann Plumptre. 'A certain marked peculiarity in whatever comes from the pen of Kotzebue characterises and distinguishes his productions from those of all other modern writers ... All Kotzebue's writings speak a liberal and enlarged mind, full of benevolence and philanthropy. His knowledge of the human heart and its secret meanders is unquestionably great ... man himself, as influenced by a variety of ardent passions is the subject of his minutest research. Few persons have ever attained to his excellence in delineating whimsical and impassioned characters'.

for the seamy side of life, provided it could be layered in sentiment.

Mrs Inchbald's effortless vulgarity of mind appears in the Preface which she supplied to the 1806 edition of The Stranger. The big talking point in this latter play was always the propriety of the conclusion, when the entry of their children leads the unhappy couple to embrace as the curtain falls. Mrs Inchbald contrives to make this even more indeterminate than Kotzebue did himself.

> a delicate spectator feels a certain shudder when the catastrophe takes place, - but there is another spectator more delicate still, who never conceives,that from an agonizing, though an affectionate embrace,(the only proof of reconciliation given, for the play ends here), any farther endearments will ensue, than those of participated sadness, mutual care of their joint offspring, and to smooth each other's passage to the grave.

At this pious, though improbable, point Mrs Inchbald should have ended. But she reopens the subject in a perfect illustration of the prurience which Kotzebue attracts:

> But should the worst suspicion of the scrupulous critic be true - can this be holding out temptation,as alleged, for women to be false to their husbands? Sure it would rather act as a preservative. What woman of common understanding and common cowardice, would dare to dishonour and forsake her husband, if she foresaw she was ever likely to live with him again?[1]

To argue as closely as this means that for Mrs Inchbald the characters are real. She is able seriously to speculate whether they will go to bed together again. And so general was this kind of reaction that Kotzebue supplied a sequel Die edle Lüge in which the Stranger pretended to have had an adulterous affair himself justto make his wife feel less guilty. This was never acted in England,but again the pattern appears of impropriety made familiar by association with the most sensitive kindness.

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1. Kotzebue, The Stranger (London, 1806),p.5.

Lovers' Vows is more 'moral' than The Stranger in that the fallen woman is shown almost dead with starvation and she has to wait twenty years before she is made an honest woman. Unlike The Stranger, where the rich were invariably benevolent and thoughtful, the upper classes in Lovers' Vows are sometimes ridiculous and inclined, at important moments, to act shabbily. The baron tries to fob off his discarded mistress with an estate but no marriage lines, and it needs the concerted pressure of his bastard and the chaplain to produce a happy ending. The play is improbable and vulgar, Mrs Inchbald substituted a rhyming butler for the original precious Count, but it was a success and that is its significance. It must have done something towards fueling the alarm of the right wing campaign against German importations and it must have given support to the Anti-Jacobin's complaint that the rich were consistently shown as vicious and the poor as virtuous. This is another of the paradoxical confusions around Kotzebue, that he perished as a rogue of the right, yet in England he was seen as a Radical. And rightly seen; The Negro Slaves and Pizarro both project primitive man as naturally virtuous, peace-loving and happy. Europeans, and by direct implication the ruling order, are shown as greedy, unscrupulous and destructive.

J.W. Donohue has a chapter on Sheridan's Pizarro in his book Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age.[1] In this he gives a full account of the way in which, after the euphoria of the first performances, critics began to attack the morality of Elvira and the compromise religion of the Sun which features in the play. What is faintly disturbing is his own aloofness from the process which he describes. He has just quoted The Anti-Jacobin Review on the pernicious influence the character of

1. J.W. Donohue, Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age (Princeton University Press, 1970).

Elvira could have on 'a girl of any elevation of spirit and ignorance of the world'. His own comment is worth consideration:

> It is not surprising, after this, to find the writer's political bias brought into play. 'I maintain', he almost shouted, 'that Elvira is nothing less than a complete Godwinite heroine, stark staring Mary all over (p.208). This condemnation - a case of guilt by association with Mary Wollstonecroft - illustrates the perennial connection in the popular mind between unorthodox political belief and immoral conduct, in this instance between British radicalism and German 'immorality'. Such a complete and indignant rejection of Sheridan's play might be dismissed as no more than an attack on the playwright's own politics, were it not that other writers of no discoverable political bias said much the same thing, if in no less strident tones.[1]

Donohue does not seem to entertain for a moment the possibility that because 'other writers of no discoverable political bias' support the Anti-Jacobin writer then his attack may be true and that there is much substance for 'the popular mind' to connect both political unorthodoxy with immoral conduct and British Radicalism with German 'immorality'.

It has been a consistent finding of this study that such connections are made. This is not to take any moral viewpoint over the period. You do not suggest a revolution without suggesting certain changes in the social, financial and sexual order, and these will involve religious beliefs. But it is an unhelpful hypocrisy, when this revolution is being preached, and preached successfully in large areas of civilised Europe, to claim that you are in no way connected with sexual and social innovation or, as the other side will put it, with immorality. The whole chain of German writers appearing in translation in this country from Gessner to Kotzebue have been revolutionary in their underlying impact, and 'immoral' in the sense that they cast contempt upon an existing system of morality in order to set up a new one.

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1. Donohue, Dramatic Character (Princeton, 1970), p.147.

Sheridan achieved a triumph for Radicalism when, on June 5th 1798, he had George III and the royal family in the royal box at Drury Lane to see Pizarro. It was a public occasion of extreme interest, the acclamation lasted ten minutes and the whole play was seen, as Sheridan intended it to be seen, as intensely patriotic. Thus he gained approval for a highly radical play, which is what Pizarro remained behind the patriotic passages. This is not to suggest that Sheridan was part of an Illuminist plot to subvert the British public, but it is to say that he was a known radical politician and that subversion was what he achieved, simply by using the base of Kotzebue's plot and characters which he must have found sympathetic. Sheridan's alterations to Kotzebue are not strictly relevant, they are verbose and incline to lessen the interest of the play wherever they are most present, but after all their dulling effect an audience would realise that the heroine was a whore, and an ageing whore, that she was also indomitable in spirit, more than the equal of the man who lived with her, and that she got away in the end scot free. That would not be all. The audience would have been induced to identify with the Peruvians and it would be obvious that the Peruvians were morally superior to the Christian Spaniards. Much has been written about Sheridan's handling of the Peruvians' Sun God. It is tactful but it is theist, not Christian, and it is presented in splendid ceremonies performed by priests who are virtuous.

This is what happens in the play. Orthodox Anglicans had every right to complain about what was going on; sexual freedom and religious tolerance were being given an efficient boost. The stage-managing, literally, was Sheridan's but the plot which brought it about was Kotzebue's. In The Stranger relaxed sexual conduct is brought to the general attention through the device of pity, in Pizarro the same conduct is made attractive by association with courage. It seems that the most important German

gift to England at this time was the trick of using a people's 'virtues' to get them to give their 'vices' a mature hearing.

Boaden had no high opinion of Elvira, 'what the cloister might gain it is impossible to say; but it is sufficiently evident that the profane world had no great loss of her,'[1] so he is not sufficiently analytical about how Sheridan really hoped to project her. He relates how Sheridan sat in the box with Richardson on the first night. At first he was miserable about Mrs Siddons because 'she had not fallen in with his notion of the character'. Later in the piece, 'the great actress burst through the embarrassment of her situation, and produced a strong feeling in the house'. That 'strong feeling' was respect; as Kemble said, 'She has made a heroine of a soldier's 'trull''. But was that exactly what Sheridan wanted if he was disturbed at first? It seems unlikely that Mrs Siddons allowed even a shadow of harlotry into her interpretation.

Perhaps Sheridan was disturbed when he heard the diffuse register of the opening speeches which he had written:

> Elvira. Audacious! Whence is thy privilege to interrupt the few moments of repose my harassed mind can snatch amid the tumults of this noisy camp? Shall I inform your master of this presumptuous treachery? Shall I disclose thee to Pizarro? Hey!
>
> Valverde. I am his servant it is true - trusted by him - and I know him well; and therefore 'tis I ask, by what magic could Pizarro gain your heart, by what fatality still holds he your affection?[2]

This is heavy language indeed for a woman to use when she has been roused by stolen kisses. The Kotzebue opening, which Sheridan had thrown away, had just that quick fire of personal exchanges which was the best feature of Kotzebue's writing. It shows how reluctant an old,English

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1. Boaden, Memoirs of J.P. Kemble (London, 1825), ii, p.240,p.239.
2. Pizarro, adapted to the English Stage by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (London, 1799), p.1. From A. von Kotzebue's play Rollas Tod.

playwright was to give up ponderous speeches for sharp natural dialogue that he should have rejected this version of the same:

Valverda. The power of your charms must excuse my freedom.

Elvira. My charms? Trust me, Valverda, you will some day accomplish a miracle.

Valverda. And that will be ... ?

Elvira. Making a woman displeased with her own beauty.

Valverda. You are bitter.

Elvira. Why then did you disturb my pleasant dream?

Valverda. Of what were you dreaming?

Elvira. That I saw you on the scaffold.[1]

The contrast is marked. In the second version, M.G. Lewis's translation, 1799, two cutting thrusts have been made in one short space. The characters establish themselves by what they do and say. In Sheridan's writing the characters describe the situation and themselves. Sheridan is the heir to an intensely literary tradition of theatrical writing where wit is expected to be delivered in parcels. In Lewis's version the wit and the poetry come naturally from the flow of the situation. If Kotzebue's advance in style was lost to the public in the acting version at least it survived in four closet versions, which must by their number have reached a considerable public.

The strength of the original Kotzebue Pizarro which Sheridan cannot throw away is the quality of surprise and uncertainty in the plot. As the Kotzebue dialogue moves nervously, darting from point to point, so the actual development can never be taken for granted. This is in complete contrast to The Stranger where the plot hardly existed. So yet again Kotzebue as an influence is hard to pin down. He showed the English

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1. Rolla or The Peruvian Hero, translated from the German by M.G. Lewis (London, 1799), p.1. From A. von Kotzebue's play Rollas Tod.

how to make a play economically out of two characters who barely stir, then he took their lumbering historical epics and cardboard figures and gave them quicksilver. Valverda, Pizarro, Alonzo, Las Casas, Elvira, Ataliba, Rolla and Cora, eight characters in all, are rounded and alive. The action is darting. When battle is expected a moving pantheistic religious ceremony appears instead. The battle itself tilts in its fortunes, the Alonzo disaster is entangled with the Rolla triumph. Then Cora switches abruptly from a sweet shepherdess to a virago. Back with the Spaniards, Elvira alters within one dialogue from loving reason to the epitome of revenge, all carried in a brazen shorthand of antithesis and compression. 'I could have pardoned thee, hadst though been faithless to obtain a throne; but thou art cowardly, and mean - and thou hast lost Elvira for ever!'[1]

Already the play has coursed through enough action to fill out a Carmelite or a Haunted Tower, but the play is only half done. It is small wonder that Sheridan's first night exceeded five hours. A scene later and Elvira is proposing love to Alonzo. Then Alonzo is free and Rolla faces death; the harlot in Elvira flashes reflected fire as she moves from man to man. Pizarro is on the point of death, then he is transformed from villain to generous soldier and the play seems to be moving to a happy conclusion. Kotzebue reverses everything by the accident of Cora's child being stolen. This changes Pizarro back to villain again; Rolla's heroic snatch of the child interrupts a fascinating piece of moral bargaining with Pizarro and, for the last time, the play seems to be achieving a happy ending. A single bullet brings the final surprise.

What is so satisfying about the play is its moral complexity. As

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1. Rolla or The Peruvian Hero, p.63.

Kotzebue wrote it there was no villain, surely the first time the 18th century had seen a historical play without one. It tests virtue and finds it not only unshakeable but infectious, the play is intelligently optimistic; reason can revive the world; we are only subject to accident: the single bullet that ends it all.

It seems appropriate that Kotzebue's own dramatic record should be as complex as his best creations, and that the critic s'verdicts should have been as random as Rolla's bullet or the dagger of Sand. Because of the uneven nature of his work he is unlikely ever to be recognised as the man who revived the themes and the dialogue of the English theatre, and this is as it should be. His other legacy was a superficial emotionalism. This his English audiences accepted uncritically and it blighted plays for the next half century. Pizarro was the greatest play of its era on the English stage and it was roughed out by a German, but its greatness is so historically limited that it can probably never be revived except as an academic curiosity. It is an exploration of humanity by a theorist of the Enlightenment, and since its time no one has been able to recognise as human the humanity it depicts. Before 1798, for almost eighty years, English theatrical audiences had chosen to applaud plays written upon a simplified morality and confined by a limited range of characterisation. In a sense therefore, they deserved the manipulator whom they finally took to their hearts.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A hesitant enthusiast for German literature - the background of William Taylor of Norwich and the creative period of his translations, 1790-1793.

The H and S author of The Speculator disappeared from the critical scene after the midsummer of 1790. This was the year when William Taylor made his brilliantly spirited translation, 'Lenora', of Bürger's Lenore, so, by superficial chronology, he appears to be conveniently at hand, ready to take over from The Speculator the role of guide to German letters for English readers. The reality was more complex.

It is a mistake to look for any one dominant directing figure at this time. The English response to German writing for the next ten years was popular, unselective and unpredictable. It was organic and not a contrived result of critical intervention. Both Taylor and the H and S author were, in their standards and taste, essentially of the eighties. Taylor was an extraordinarily accomplished translator of ballad-style German poems, but the German ballads were part of a literary mode which had its origins in England in the seventeen sixties, so this did not give Taylor a confident set of responses to the very un-English plays and novels which came flooding out of Germany in the years after 1790.

There are multiple reasons for the actual shape which the 'German Mania' took: for the neglect of Goethe and Lessing, the admiration for Schiller's works as closet drama but not as stage plays, the concentration on Kotzebue and the vogue for the 'German' horror novel. But, simply because Taylor had the reputation of being a leading authority on German writing, a study of his character, his translations and critical reviews is bound

to be illuminating. If the age accepted him as its German critic then the age deserved him, and he reflects the age with the frailty of his scholarship and the uncertainty of his judgements.

Hazlitt confidently praised him as a critic: 'the style of philosophical criticism which has been the boast of The Edinburgh Review was first introduced into The Monthly Review about the year 1796 by Mr. William Taylor of Norwich'[1]. Apart from being three years out in his dates (Taylor began these reviews in April 1793), Hazlitt would have been hard pressed to find anything of philosophy in the series, and the direction of the criticism is usually conventional and often hesitant. More wisely, Coleridge broke off in mid sentence when he was trying to define Taylor's potential. Suggesting Taylor, in a letter of Southey, as the right poet to compose the religious epic of the new enlightenment he wrote: 'his knowledge, his style, his all-half believing Doubtingness of all his - in short, I wish you would suggest it to him.'[2]

At least Coleridge perceived that Taylor's strength was creative rather than critical and Coleridge had sensed the woolly religiosity behind Taylor's Jacobinical reputation. Southey, Harriet Martineau and Carlyle all labelled him as a neoatheist, but that was only a reflection of their own confidently theistic standpoints.

Taylor's Great Year was 1790, when he translated 'Lenora' and Nathan the Wise, at the very start of the decade of the German mania. He was only twenty five at the time so, for an explanation of his talent and his interests, it is necessary to look closely at his upbringing and at his friends.

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1. Hazlitt, Spirit of the Age (London, 1825), p.308.
2. Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by E.L.Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1956), i, p.292.

He was born in 1765 in Norwich, and the fact that the city is always added to his name, like a second surname, emphasises his provinciality. His father ran an importing and exporting business with strong connections across the North Sea, and Taylor's indulgent parents were Unitarians worshipping at the Octagon Chapel in the city. There was a vigorous intellectual element in the congregation.

Because of this nonconformist background Taylor was not sent to public school but to a small boarding school, which his father helped to found, at Palgrave in Norfolk. Though he was only nine at the time,the influence of the people he met at Palgrave was still working strongly on him in 1790 and it was there that an element of idiosyncratic radicalism must have begun to affect him. This radical strain seems present in almost all figures in the German movement at this time.[1]

The Headmaster and founder of Palgrave was a dissenting minister the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld. He is not central to Taylor's history. Of Huguenot background he was a manic depressive who once attempted to kill his wife with a table knife, forcing her to escape by leaping through a window. Eventually he drowned himself in the New River. His importance lies in the fact that he married in 1774 Laetitia Aikin, a well known radical and poet and the sister of another radical poet John Aikin.

She had married beneath her on a kindly impulse. Warned that her fiancé was occasionally lunatic she declared, 'if I were now to disappoint him he would certainly go mad'.[2] Her family blamed the baneful influence

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1. Mrs. Barbauld was a close friend of the publisher Joseph Johnson 'in a chosen knot of lettered equals', Works of A.L. Barbauld, ed. by Lucy Aikin (London, 1825) i, p.XXXIII. Joseph Johnson's career spans the whole of this study: Fuseli was his lodger 1768-69 and he published Taylor's Iphigenia (in a dilatory fashion). He has left no record explaining his involvement in German literature.
2. Anna Laetitia Le Breton, Memoir of Mrs. Barbauld (London, 1874), p.42.

of the Nouvelle Héloise for this ill starred union, seeing Barbauld as St Preux. Even as early as her engagement in 1773 Laetitia Aikin was a figure in literary circles. Dr Johnson was shocked enough to declare: 'If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the Congress'. He predicted 'all her employment now is to suckle fools and chronicle small beer'.[1]

William Taylor was one of her first students and she taught him English composition. He recorded that in individual tutorials each week 'vulgarisms were chastised, the idle epithets were cancelled.[2] This in itself is interesting because Taylor himself was to have a keen eye for 'idle epithets', as his correspondence with Walter Scott shows. But in fact his own prose style varied oddly between pompous latinate diction and what his second editor on the Monthly Review, G.E. Griffiths, described as 'your habit of employing words and forms of construction which are not sanctioned or not current in our language, deriving them both from foreign and native sources'.[3] It is possible that Taylor's tendency to use foreign constructions and native sources in his prose served him much better in his translations of German poetry. What might appear lumbering or colloquial in prose might seem a rac y reflection of an alien register in poetry. But this is speculation and there is no proof that Laetitia Aikin taught him this particular trick of style.

What does seem likely to have been influential was the fact that Taylor kept up close links with both the Aikins until well after the end of the century, and the Aikins had revealed, as early as 1773, a taste

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1. Grace A. Oliver, Memoir of Mrs. Barbauld (London, 1884), p.XL.
2. W. Taylor, 'Biographic Particulars of the late Dr. Sayers', Poetical Works of F. Sayers (London 1830), p.viii.
3. J.W. Robberds, Memoir of William Taylor of Norwich, 2 vols. (London, 1843), i, p.198.

for concentrated Gothic horror writing. It seems highly probably that they passed this taste on to Taylor, their much younger friend.

The 1773 writing was Sir Bertrand, quite probably the very earliest of the genre of 'Gothic Fragments', which were to be popular in the 1790s. Nathan Drake, who wrote several 'Fragments', the first being 'Sir Gawen' in The Speculator, 1790, criticised Mrs Barbauld's Sir Bertrand for its 'deep Gothic' tone and its lack of 'sportive Gothic'.[1]

In fact Sir Bertrand, which occurs in an essay 'On the pleasure derived from Objects of Terror',[2] was probably not written by Mrs Barbauld as Drake supposed, but by her brother, Dr John Aikin. In her introductory 'Memoir' to the Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 1825, her niece and John Aikin's daughter, Lucy Aikin, has this to say:

> The authors did not think proper to distinguish their respective contributions, and several of the pieces have in consequence been generally misappropriated. The fragment of Sir Bertrand in particular, though alien from the character of that brilliant and airy imagination, which was never conversant with terror and rarely with pity, has been repeatedly ascribed to Mrs Barbauld, even in print.[3]

Indeed the tone of Sir Bertrand is much closer to that of John Aikin's Poems of 1791 than Laetitia Aikin's Poems of 1774. The 'fragment' was widely noted and stands in something of the relationship to Burke's Philosophical Enquiry, 1759, that Gessner's Idyls stands to Winckelmann's Reflections, 1765. Both works were brief, popular demonstrations of the kind of material which Burke and Winckelmann might have used themselves if they had had any desire to indulge in literary exemplars of their theories. Both the Idyls and Sir Bertrand have a direct naivety, even

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1. The Speculator (London, 1790), p.48.
2. From J. and A.L. Aikin, Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose (London, 1773).
3. Lucy Aikin, Works of A.L. Barbauld, 2 vols.(London, 1825), i, xiii.

crudity of writing that tends to leave them underrated by modern commentators on the period.

The attendant essay on 'Objects of Terror' and the actual text of Sir Bertrand are highly suggestive of Taylor's aims when he chose to translate Lenore. They also suggest why John Aikin swiftly copied 'Lenora's' theme in his 'Arthur and Matilda;' and why he never forgot Taylor's brilliant translation over the next six years and was finally responsible for publishing 'Lenora' in the Monthly Magazine in 1796, just in time to give Taylor some credit for his originality in 1790.

In the essay Aikin is puzzled because,

> 'the apparent delight with which we dwell upon objects of pure terror, where our moral feelings are not in the least concerned, and no passion seems to be excited but the depressing one of fear, is a paradox of the heart,[1]

This and the following quotation go some way to explain the element of disproportionate punishment in 'Lenora', which disturbed several commentators.[2] It may even explain something of the same element in Coleridge's 'Ancyent Marinere:'

> where the agency of invisible beings is introduced, of 'forms unseen,and mightier far than we', our imagination, darting forth, explores with rapture the new world which is laid open to its view, and rejoices in the expansion of its powers. Passion and fancy co-operating elevate the soul to its highest pitch; and the pain of terror is lost in amazement.[3]

Aikin goes on to subdivide terror into two categories: Natural Horror,which he exemplifies by the famous scene with the corpse in Smollett's Ferdinand Count Fathom, and The Terrible joined with the Marvellous.

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1. Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose, p.120.
2. See the Hon. W.R. Spencer's'Lenora'(London, 1799), which collects four versions.
3. Miscellaneous Pieces, p.125.

This last appears to be the same as that 'Sportive Gothic', whose lack Nathan Drake complained of in The Speculator. John Aikin exemplifies it by the Arabian Nights and The Castle of Otranto, then offers his own ten page Sir Bertrand as something 'in which both these manners are attempted to be in some degree united.'[1]

Sir Bertrand, caught on 'dreary moors before curfew', hears 'the sullen toll of a distant bell', comes upon 'a large antique mansion....the injuries of time were strongly marked on everything about it. The heavy door, creaking upon its hinges reluctantly yielded to his hand'. Inside he 'beheld across a hall upon a large staircase a pale bluish flame which cast a dismal gleam of light around.'

He follows the blue light until 'a dead cold hand met his left hand and firmly grasped it'. A 'deep hollow groan' resounds through a vault and a figure appears 'completely armed, thrusting forward the bloody stump of an arm, with a terrible frown and menacing gesture, and brandishing a sword'. Challenged, this vanishes, leaving a massy iron key to a room where a coffin lies. 'Along the room on both sides were gigantic statues of black marble attired in the Moorish habits and holding enormous sabres in their right hands.' Braving these foreshadowings of Don Giovanni and Vathek, Sir Bertrand follows the blue flame to the coffin. 'Suddenly a lady in a shroud and black veil rose up in it and stretched out her arms towards him...she threw up her veil and kissed his lips.' An earthquake and darkness effect a transformation to a room with pure oystal lustres, delicious music and a sumptuous banquet. Here 'a lady of incomparable beauty'[2] thanks him as her deliverer, but the fragment breaks off as she begins to speak.

As a way of indulging fantasies without the tiresome business of

1. Miscellaneous Pieces, p.127.
2. Ibid, pp.127-37.

explanations the Gothic Fragment has obvious appeal. The close packed horrors of 'Lenora' and its abrupt ending are in a similar pattern, certainly in a similar self indulgent mood. John Aikin also wrote Gothic ballads. A verse of 'Duncan's Warning' suggests their tone and their debt to Gray's 'The Bard:'

> Hears't thou not the raven's croak?
> See'st thou not the blasted oak?
> Feel'st thou not the loaded sky?
> Read thy danger, King, and fly. 1.

Between them the two Aikins were responsible for bringing the shrinking and modest Taylor's translations of Bürger to the awareness of a wide public. In his Poems of 1791 John Aikin published an indifferent version of Taylor's 'Lenora' called 'Arthur and Matilda.' This poem is interesting for the first, faint, printed hint of Coleridge's Death Ship:

> Then, as across the watery waste
> He bent his cheerless eyes,
> From out the gloom a whitening form,
> Dim seen, appeared to rise.
>
> Swift gliding on the sight it grew;
> And now, in prospect plain,
> A little boat was seen to come
> Self-mov'd across the main. 2.

It was followed by a Note:

'The idea of this Piece was taken from a ballad translated by an ingenious friend from the German of Buirgher. The story and scenery are however totally different, and the resemblance only consists in a visionary journey.' 3.

This may not seem a very generous acknowledgement of his debt to Taylor but it was probably restrained by Taylor's own nervous wish to

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1. J. Aikin, Poems (London, 1791), p.23.
2. Ibid, p.33.
3. Ibid, p.41. N.

remain provincial and obscure. Certainly Dr Aikin made up for it handsomely in 1796 when he founded his own periodical, the Monthly Magazine. He promptly used it to print Taylor's own 'Lenora' in time to establish Taylor's superiority as a translator in that year which saw no less than four other versions of Bürger's Lenore in print. In all his years of writing for the Monthly Review Taylor seems never to have been encouraged to print his translations, only his reviews. It was in Aikin's Monthly Magazine that he went on to print a succession of translations of German poems which were probably far more influential than his generally unremarkable reviews.

Laetitia Barbauld was not idle on her old pupil's behalf during these years. Taylor's correspondence with Southey did not begin until 1798 and in the years before that he had more contacts with Continental than with British figures of note. Mrs. Barbauld, in contrast, included among her friends Dugald Stewart, Walter Scott, Hannah More, Dr Priestly, John Howard and, later, Crabb Robinson. At some time between 1793 and 1795, accounts conflict over the date,[1] Mrs. Barbauld read Taylor's 'Lenora' to a gathering at Dugald Stewart's house in Edinburgh. Scott was not present, but he is supposed to have told Mrs. Barbauld's niece Lucy that a friend who had heard the reading recalled two lines:

> 'Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede;
> Splash, splash, across the sea'[2]

and that these were enough to excite Scott into wanting to become a poet.

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1. Jerome March Mrs. Barbauld and her contemporaries (London, 1877), p.68. says 'Mrs Barbauld being in Scotland in 1795'; Scott himself said 'about the summer 1793 or 1794'. Anna Laetitia Le Breton says 'In the year 1793' in her book Memoir of Mrs Barbauld. D.N.B. says 1796.

2. The truth of Walter Scott's involvement with German literature must have been far more complex. He was present at Henry Mackenzie's 21 April 1788 lecture. Also Dr Willich bored Scott and seven other young men who were learning German with endless readings of Gessner's Tod Abels. Paul Giradin, The Literary Circle of Edinburgh at the end of the 18th century (1914), p.11.

All this is something of a literary legend and there is no exact proof that the translation Taylor made in 1790 had not been considerably refined and altered by the time it was printed in 1796, but clearly Mrs. Barbauld admired Taylor's version of the Bürger poem and did something to make it known.

For all their interest and their proselytizing, neither of the Aikins offers in his or her work the inspirational key to Taylor's particular talent for translating German ballads with a ruthless directness of language. John Aikin seems to have imitated Taylor rather than the reverse, and the greater part of Mrs. Barbauld's verse is thoroughly conventional, as in

> 'To Mrs. P.....With some drawings of Birds and Insects
>
> Painting and Poetry are near allied
> The kindred arts two sister Muses guide:
> This charms the eye, that steals upon the ear;
> There sounds are tuned; and colours blended here.'[1]

This seems a century away, linguistically, from Taylor's splendidly unrestrained translations, 'Lenora' and 'The Lass of Fair Wone', where the language is the opposite of urbane, where horrors are vigorously rendered and a rough, naive Gothick quality refreshes the whole. It is, of course, quite possible for a writer to enjoy working with both polished and coarse material. Schiller's plays and Bürger's ballads were all the more stimulating to readers in the seventeen nineties after the rather airless literature of the two preceding decades. But the reason why Taylor in particular worked so happily in the genre of Gothick ballad may well be found in yet another relationship which dated back to his childhood and to the school at Palgrave.

Taylor remained unmarried all his life and his deepest relationship

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1. The Works of A.L. Barbauld, ed. by Lucy Aikin, 2 vols. (London, 1825), I, 39.

seems to have been with another lifelong bachelor, Frank Sayers, three years his senior and the orphan son of a Norwich business man. The standard source for Taylor's life is J.W. Robberds' Memoir of William Taylor of Norwich[1] which almost buries its subject under reverential prose. Easily the most revealing source for Taylor's emotions and literary tastes is Taylor's own 'Biographical Particulars of the late Dr Sayers', which appeared as an introduction to The Poetical Works of F. Sayers (London, 1830.)

In this Taylor recalled his days at Palgrave where he and Sayers were among the first eight boarders:

'The same single-bedded room was allotted to us both; we were disciplined in the same classes; we stayed together at Palgrave three years; and there began that 'early and uninterrupted' friendship, which has strewn in my way so many valuable and delightful moments and the record of which constitutes the most valued trophy of my life.'[2]

The 'record' to which Taylor was referring was the dedication in Sayer's collected poems: 'To W. Taylor, Junior, of Norwich, these poems, the offering of an early and uninterrupted friendship, are dedicated by the author', and Taylor was still calling this 'the most valued trophy of my life', when he was sixty four, after a lifetime of scholarly achievement.

The two were writing poetry for each other as early as 1775 when Taylor was only ten. After Palgrave Taylor's father, who was always indulgent to his son's scholarly bent, sent him to travel for three years on the Continent, where he studied Italian, French and German. He spent the last year at Detmold in Westphalia studying German. A letter to his father reported: 'by applying with great assiduity to the reading of our best

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1. London, 1843.
2. Poetical Works of F. Sayers, edited by William Taylor (London, 1830), p.viii.

authors he has acquired an extensive and well grounded knowledge of our language.'[1] Though furnished with letters of introduction to Goethe he failed to address him as 'Geheimder (sic) Rath', or Privy Councillor, and it is not certain that they met. He returned to England, aged seventeen, in 1782, the year when Schiller was writing Fiesco, so he was actually in Germany in 1781 the year when Die Räuber first appeared, yet never seemed drawn to the play or even interested in it.[2] It was then, according to Robberds, that the relationship with Frank Sayers became 'truly intense'. Taylor walked out to Sayers's cottage on most afternoons, and an attic bedroom was set aside for Sayers in the Taylor town house. Of this time Taylor wrote

'The literature of Germany, then almost unknown in England, I had pervasively studied, and was eager to display; and I frequently translated for his amusement such passages as appeared to me remarkable for singularity or beauty'.[3]

When Sayers went to Edinburgh to study medicine the two friends went on a tour of the Highlands. This was in 1788, the year of Mackenzie's lecture. An incident in the tour illustrates the light hearted naivety of the pair:

'In our vehicle we had brought a copy of Ossian, the genuineness of whose poems we both at that time admitted; and we endeavoured especially during this drizzly morning (at Loch Lomond) to associate his descriptions with locality, but to little effect. 'It is difficult', Sayers observed, 'to become persuaded that Homer can have been blind when he wrote, but it is not difficult to believe so of Ossian.'[4]

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1. Robberds, Memoir (London, 1843), i, 30. The letter is from Herr Clostermeyer, a business associate.
2. Unless a very long review 'Desultory Observations on the Robbers' is Taylor's. It appears in Volume One of The Cabinet (Norwich, 1795), an intensely Radical periodical of Taylor's home city.
3. Robberds, Memoir, (London. 1843), i, 53.
4. Poetical Works of F. Sayers, p. xxiii.

Writing in 1830 Taylor could afford to be amused by this amateur scholarship, but Sayers was an Ossian enthusiast: a Celto-Goth, and Taylor, probably under Sayers's influence, was every bit as much an amateur enthusiast himself. This naivety, this eagerness to believe in and enjoy Gothick excess was essential to both men at their most creative period. Without this quality Taylor could hardly have translated Bürger with such conviction. The same quality of intense and naive commitment to a fantasy is present in Coleridge's 'Ancyent Marinere.'

As late as 1793 Taylor's scholarship was Gothick and gullible. In a review of William Owen's The Heroic Elegies and other pieces of Llywarc Hen Prince of Cumbria for the Monthly Review Taylor himself, not Owen, suggested that Welsh might be a barbarously decayed relict of Greek. He also repeated approvingly Owen's theory that Quakerism was a survival of Druidic lore which had lingered in South Wales to be absorbed by George Fox. His most interesting delusion in this revealing review indicates that he thought Ossian may have written in a primitive form of German. Speaking of the Piks (Sic) he writes that 'their ruddy hair and large limbs pronounced them of German extraction,' and 'they' no doubt spoke one of the Gothic dialects.'[1]

His scholarship was inexcusable in 1793. Paul Henri Mallet had confused the Germanic and Celtic peoples in his Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc; but that had been published in 1756.[2] and his error had been firmly corrected by Bishop Percy in his translation of the same book, Northern Antiquities, London 1770. Percy prefaced his translation with forty seven pages of etymological comparisons of the Lord's Prayer in twenty seven different languages to correct Mallett's central assumption

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1. Monthly Review, XI (1793), p.18
2. In Copenhagen, A supplementary volume followed it next year entitled Monumens de la mythologie et de la poèsie des Celtes et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves.

that Celtic and Gothic languages were closely related. In vain as far as Taylor was concerned. It is fair to say, also, that if you were a young intelligent man in 1788 and still believed in the genuineness of Ossian it was a gesture of faith not reason.

Sayers's time in Edinburgh was ended by a fit of 'hypochondriasis', a deep melancholy brought on by studying Greek and visiting the sick wards of the hospitals. Sayers's mother and Taylor hurried north to sustain him and, as a result of a boating holiday on the lake at Keswick, 'concatenations of desponding ideas progressively gave way to the scenery of nature,and the soothings of affection.'[1] The phrases are Taylor's own and illustrate how oddly at variance his own style of Latinisms and antithesis was from the spare sensitive register of his best translations.

The University of Hardervyck in Holland gave Sayers a quick doctorate for a thesis on 'The Physical effect of the passions' and he returned to Norwich in 1789. Here he actually studied German with Taylor for the first time. Several of the poems which they worked on appeared much later in the Monthly Magazine, Goethe's 'Proserpina' being one of them.[2] Sayers himself versified a ballad under the title 'Sir Egwin.'

In 1790 Sayers published,about midsummer,a collection of his poems and monodramas (essentially one act historical plays in verse), called Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology. Robberds comments on these:

'William Taylor shared warmly in the gratification which their success confered on his friend. He was stimulated by his example, and emulous of his glory.'[3]

This, then, was the year when Taylor wrote his 'Lenora' from Bürger's

1. Poetical Works of F. Sayers, p. XXVII
2. This appeared anonymously in the Monthly Magazine,VI (1798), p.47. The attribution to Taylor is by Robberds, Memoir, i, 167.
3. Robberds, Memoir, i, 81.

Lenore.

It was the year also when, between March 27th and June 22nd, The Speculator came out in twice weekly parts. The possibility was raised in a preceding chapter that William Taylor could have been the H and S author of its most important essays, and, though the study will be inconclusive, this is the point to mention briefly the facts that favour the theory.

Drake indicates that there was only one other author; it seems illogical that one should hide behind two letters; S could stand for Sayers, the 'Poem by a Deserted Girl' is uninspired enough to have been written by him.

If Sayers was about to publish his Dramatic Sketches and Taylor was 'emulous of his glory' it would have been simple for him to have collected a few of his essays and issued them in parts. Some of the H essays have very laboured and Germanic constructions. Taylor was inclined to these, as both Southey and G.E. Griffiths told him. Taylor and Sayers were interested in Ossian and The Speculator often mentions Ossian. Mrs. Barbauld is one of the very few contemporary English poets mentioned in The Speculator; she taught Taylor and Sayers. The Speculator chooses to translate passages of the mildest and most accessible plays of Schiller and Goethe; Taylor's later reviews are timid about Schiller's wilder excesses.

At this time Taylor was a member of a Norwich literary and debating society called 'The Speculative'. He spoke frequently at this and at another society founded by his friend John Aikin in Yarmouth, this also was called 'The Speculative'[1]. The likeness to the magazine's title is interesting. Both societies were Radical. The Speculator is mildly progressive in tone.

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1. It was a favoured name for such societies. The Edinburgh Speculative Society was perhaps the best known.

Opposed to Taylor's authorship is the fact that between May 9th and at least June 6th, while the magazine's parts were coming out, he was away in Paris enjoying the benign early stages of the Revolution. This could, of course, be the cloaking device of a very retiring man. Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry (London, 1830), makes repeated use of material from his earlier reviews but there is nothing in it from The Speculator, though by 1830 he could hardly still have been interested in anonymity.

So the question of the identity of the H and S writer remains unresolved. There is nothing in Taylor's critical writing of the seventeen nineties to equal the confident sweep of The Speculator's essays or their enthusiasm or their analytical subltety; but then there is nothing in his later translations to equal his work done in 1790.

Taylor was called back from France by a plaintive sonnet from Frank Sayers: 'Addrest to Mr - in France during the Summer of 1790:'

> 'Cast a fond look on Britain's peaceful shore
> Tho' manly ardour in thy bosom glows,
> Here soft Affection spreads her grateful store
> And friendship calls thee where no storms molest.'[1]

He returned in time to share his friend's satisfaction when Sayer's Dramatic Sketches were published, and to use his Continental contacts to secure their recognition in Germany. He listed his successes in his introduction to Poetical Works of F. Sayers. A review of the Dramatic Sketches in the Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung, after dwelling on the 'poetical curse' of 'conventional jingling, uniformity of thoughts, epithets and rimes' which lay on England, continued:

'In these Dramatic Sketches the curse seems at length dissolved, and posterity will bind the name of Sayers close to that of Gray, to whose Muse his seems remarkably akin.[2]

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1. Poems by F. Sayers M.D., printed Norfolk Press for J.Johnson, (1792), p.198.
2. Poetical Works by F. Sayers (London, 1830), p.XLV.

In addition Sayers's work was translated into German prose by F.D. Graeter, the editor of Bragur, a magazine devoted to northern archaeology, and into German poetry by Dr. Neubeck (Leipzig 1793). Taylor happily concluded that they had become 'an European classic, even before they were recognised as a national one.'[1]

To understand his delight in the limited fame of his friend's bizarre verse, while his own Bürger masterpiece was languishing unpublished, Taylor's own feeling of discipleship to Sayers has to be understood. In the 'Biographical Particulars', he wrote of him:

'he was my protector, my helper, my model; a feeling of gratitude, of deference, of admiration, accompanied my attachment from its commencement, and still, I hope, marks the attitude in which I bend over his urn.'[2]

The 'monodramas' of the Dramatic Sketches are pretentious and, in an ordinary sense, worthless as poetry, but they are a stimulating exploration of language. It is possible to sense that Taylor's 'Lenora' written against their background, grew out of them, gaining confidence from their raw crudity and freedom. Taylor's actual choice of the Lenore story as a translation exercise seems unlikely to have been the spontaneous preference of a man who admired Wieland. It is more likely to be the result of a wish to compete with Sayers's Ancient Saxonry. Sayers never shared Taylor's enthusiasm for German sources. 'In this', Taylor admitted ruefully in 1830, 'he anticipated the opinion of his country, which has received but coldly even the best translations from the German.'[3]

Taylor wrote of Sayers's Dramatic Sketches: 'They form an imperishable monument of British poetry'[4]. For plots they rival Nathan Drake's worst

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1. Poetical Works by F. Sayers (London, 1830), p.LVI.
2. Ibid, p.VIII.
3. Ibid, p.XXXI.
4. Ibid, p.XXXII.

contrivings, but so, of course, does the plot of 'Christabel', which even Coleridge despaired of concluding.

'Moina' is a fair example of the monodramas. The eponymous heroine is a northern Celt who has been captured by King Harold the Saxon and brought south to be his paramour. Her Celtic lover, Carril, follows to attempt a rescue, but before he can act, Harold is brought home dead from battle and Moina, following Saxon custom, is buried alive with him. In despair Carril throws himself off a rock and dies.

Taylor's assessment of Carril's bardic song is that it:

'may vie with any similar passage in Ossian. The visit to the prophetess considerably surpasses that analogous, but tediously, protracted scene in the sixth book of Lucan's Pharsalia'[1]

Of Harold's hearse songs he wrote

'They display the fancy of Pindar, without his extravagance, and the feeling of Sophocles, without his tameness. Harold's death song is a sublime and magnificent delineation of the imaginary hereafter of the rude warriors of the north'.[2]

The actual quality of Sayer's verse can be judged from an example:

'Who lifts the gold-tipt horn
Of mantling mead?
Harold lifts the gold-tipt horn
Of mantling mead.
Happy he who fighting falls,
Happy in the battle's clangour
To feel the quivering lance.
When the hunter's dart has pierced
The roe-buck's dappled side,
Prone from the summit of the rock
He falls,and falling dies;
His dark-grey eyes for ever close,
No more he climbs the grassy hill,
No more he seeks the cooling spring,
But sinks to endless night.'[3]

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1. Poetical Works of Frank Sayers (London, 1830), p.XXXIII.
2. Ibid, p. XXXIV.
3. F. Sayers, Poems containing Dramatic Sketches (Norwich, 1807), p.77.

This is from Harold's hearse songs and it is almost pure Ossian. What is interesting is that Taylor praises it wholly by classical comparisons. Gordon's 1762 book Occasional Thoughts, examined in the first chapter of this study, worked in the same equation, seeing Ossian wholly in terms of Homer. The amateurish scholarship of the period is working to ennoble Germany, and therefore Bürger, as a source. Taylor was so wild a linguist that he was able to convince himself that Ossian wrote primitive German. So, if Ossian was a native British equivalent of Homer, then German was a tongue worthy to set alongside the Latin and Greek Taylor had been trained to admire.

The one huge virtue of Sayers's verse is that it has escaped, by following Macpherson, the tedium of predictable epithet and inevitable couplet. It is a kind of free verse, a raw rhetoric of question and reply with a trace of alliteration: a direct, fast moving pseudo-barbarian register. It is achieving for poetry what the Gothic Revival did for architecture: a movement out to ventures where horrid mistakes could happen but also where Fonthill and the Palace of Westminster, the 'Ancyent Marinere' and the 'Eve of St. Agnes' could be created.

Sayers cannot be dismissed as a blind and ignorant instrument of the zeitgeist. In the Preface to his Poems,1792,[1] he seems fully aware of the resource which he is opening to English poetry:

> '....the most magnificent features of Scandinavian superstition have hithertoo been chiefly concealed in the Sagas of Iceland, or have appeared only in the tragedies of Klopstock and a few other pieces, little known,except among the Germans and the Danes...[2] I am tempted to publish the following Sketches with a view of giving some slight idea of the neglected beauties of the Gothic religion, and of recommending a freer introduction of its imagery into the Poetry of the English Nation.'[3]

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1. Moina is cut out from this collection 'lest the praise of heroic suicide should perhaps operate dangerously on common life' Poetical Works of F. Sayers,, p.XXXVI
2. Klopstock's friend Jan Ewald, a Dane, wrote an opera The Death of Balder. Taylor translated this and Sayers turned it into The Descent of Frea. Graeter found it inaccurate.
3. Poems by F. Sayers M.D. (1792, Norfolk Press for J. Johnson), p.2.

He was, in fact, moving at a parallel but far more conscious and sophisticated level to the Gothic novelists of the period, and the success of the process he was trying to set in train was prodigious. From Lenore to Wuthering Heights the strength of the Gothic line of literature was its freedom to use impossible supernatural events as splendid brash symbols to expose hidden psychological truths: the beloved returns in the dead of night and puts her ice cold hand through the broken window pane; but grasps the wrong man's hand!

That Taylor was just as conscious of his linguistic innovation is proven in his letter to Scott criticising Scott's version of Lenore:

'I think a few passages written in too elevated a strain for the general spirit of the poem. The age leans too much to the Darwin style... Among the passages too stately and pompous, I should reckon.

'The mountain echoes startling wake;'
'And for devotion's choral swell
Exchange the rude discordant noise;'
'Fell famine marks the maddening throng;'
'With wild despair's peverted eye;'

and perhaps one or two more. In the twenty first stanza, I prefer Bürger's

'Trampling the corn into chaff and dust;'

to your more metaphorical, and therefore less picturesque,

'Destructive sweep the field along'.

To see that the specific was more 'picturesque' than the metaphorical was to open up a new kind of poetry. Taylor's originality in this linguistic reform is mildly limited by the fact that he later altered his version of Bürger's

'Sechs Bretter und zwey Brettchen':-
'Far hence I rest my head', to:
'Six planks, one shrouding sheet'

because he admired his rival translator, W.R. Spencer's

'Six dark boards,and one milk white sheet'.[1]

It is possible that nothing else in the translations from German in this period of study, 1760-1800,made as much impact on English and Scottish writing as this one poem.'Lenora'was Taylor's moment, when he was able to translate a glowing example, add the sands and the sea to its images by his own inspiration, and leave the example to a group of poets prepared to learn from him.

It is ironical that,in this same year 1790, he produced another translation,Nathan the Wise, which could have been as stirring a yeast in the English theatre as'Lenora'became in English poetry. But because Taylor depended far too much on his friends for communication Nathan went unnoticed.

Again and again in this German movement there is more cause for regret at examples not followed than pleasure at models successfully copied. One poem from one poet was influential but there was little real impact of the plays of Lessing, Goethe and Schiller on the stale trivialities of the English stage. It is no use arguing that the English theatre at this timewas prosperous and self confident, therefore in no mood for foreign innovation. The English theatre in 1790 needed adult plays to explore the human condition as much as English poetry needed vital direct language. Poetry regenerated itself; drama, after a brief bout of Kotzebue, went on into the vacant spaces of the 19th century theatre.

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1. Robberds, Memoir (1843), i, 96.
2. Robberds prints a letter dated 19 November 1791, from a German, M. Benzler, with whom Taylor regularly corresponded. The letter may partially explain Taylor's reluctance to print Lenora, a copy of which he had just sent to Benzler. Benzler wrote: 'you have perfectly caught the tone of your ancient ballads, which is not, however, that of Burger. The latter is manly, concise, full of fire and strength; the former,somewhat feeble and garrulous, but, at the same time,softer and more agreeable. They bear the same relation to each other as a robust,energetic adult,and a quiet, mild old man'. Robberds, Memoir, i, 106.

His translation of Lessing's Nathan the Wise was the great lost opportunity, not only of Taylor as a translator but of the whole German movement in the 18th century. The original play, for all its Gothic plotting, was, in the maturity of its theme and the wit of its treatment, superior to any new play which reached the London stage in the last twenty years of the century. In addition to this, Taylor's translation was so sensitive that it developed a new blank verse register which could, if it had been taken up by other poets as Coleridge caught up the tone of Taylor's 'Lenora', have provided an escape route from the stale Shakesperian line which weighed down virtually all Romantic verse dramas.

These are strong claims for a very obscure piece of Anglo German literature, but to read Taylor's Nathan after the historic romantic dramas, drawing room comedies and musical comedy epics which succeeded in London at this period, is both a lightening and a frustrating experience. It has a Shavian plot expressed in verse which reads as if written by a collaborating team of Robert Browning and Christopher Fry. Improbable, whimsical, serious, optimistic, light hearted and elegant, it is an adult play and if it had become established in the London theatres it would have educated the city that had recently indulged itself in the Gordon Riots. More than any other translation this play proves that what the German movement fatally lacked was a Ruskin: a confident, fluent advocate in press and lecture hall, a courageous but respectable radical with a golden pen.

There is no mystery about Nathan's non appearance on the English scene. It is all recorded on the first two pages of its first edition. 'Nathan the Wise, a dramatic poem written originally in German by G.E. Lessing'. With Taylor's fatal timidity the translator is not mentioned and, most unusually for translations of this period, there is not a word

of introduction,explanation, biography or apologetics, though the play is particularly controversial and novel. Then comes the most revealing fact:

> 'Norwich printed by Stephenson and Matchett in 1791 and published in 1805 by R. Philips London.'

On the next page a printed note has been glued. This reads:

'At Berlin appeared, in 1779, the first edition of Nathan the Wise, an argumentative drama, written to inculate mutual indulgence between religious sects. It passes for the best work of Lessing; was well received originally by the critic, the statesman, and the philosopher; and has stood the test of a quarter of a century with growing reputation. By Schiller it has lately been curtailed, and in that form is become a favourite acting play throughout Germany.

This translation is from the entire work: it was undertaken in March, 1790, when questions of toleration were much afloat, and was printed the following year for distribution among the translator's acquaintance. Now that the topic is acquiring a fresh interest, it has been thought fit that the remaining copies of that edition should be exposed to sale.

Norwich, May, 1805.'

Even there the story of shrinking hesitancy is not complete. They may have been 'exposed to sale' in 1805, fifteen years after the translation had been made, but the copy in the Taylorian has written on its fly leaf.

'John Juby, from the author May 24th 1822'

so they were still being given away to a limited circle thirty two years after the date when they should have been filling the review columns with controversy.

Taylor's Nathan was not the first English translation of Lessing's

play. R.E. Raspe had translated Nathan the Wise, a Philosophical Drama, (London, 1781), a particularly ill-timed publication as far as religious toleration and the capital were concerned. It was virtually ignored by the reviewers.

But Raspe, a German, was a foreigner in a strange country, in no strong position to defend his work. The mystery about Taylor's diffidence in putting a convincingly agnostic, even anti-Christian, play before a wide public is that he had made no secret of his staunch radicalism. In the November of this same year, when a bourgeois and moderate revolution seemed to be succeeding in France, the Speculative Society was founded in Norwich to pursue philosophical inquiry. Taylor joined it and read frequent papers to it. According to Robberds, Taylor and his father were both active members of the Revolutionary Society of Norwich. His father was the secretary because of 'his taste for convivial pleasures and his attachment to the cause of civil and religious liberty', but his son 'appears to have conducted the correspondence,and to have been the framer of the various resolutions, addresses and reports which emanated from the Society.'[1] Later to shield his father from possible persecution by Pitt's officers he altered documents to make it appear that he was the secretary himself.

Robberds reports that Taylor contributed articles to the Cambridge Intelligencer and a Norwich periodical The Cabinet during these early years of the decade. The character of these papers and the courage required to become associated with them can be judged.

On Saturday 20 July 1793, Mrs. Barbauld contributed this 'Soldiers' Prayer' to the Cambridge Intelligencer under the title 'Sins of Government sins of the Nation':

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1. Robberds, Memoir (London, 1843), i, 67.

'God of love, father of all the families of earth, we are going to tear in pieces our brethren of mankind, but our strength is not equal to our fury, we beseech thee to assist us in the work of our slaughter - Whatever mischief we shall do, we shall do it in thy name; we hope, therefore, thou wilt protect us.'

The Cabinet was even more radical. Produced 'By a Society of Gentlemen' its epigraph was: 'I should have everything to fear, were tyrants to read my book, but tyrants never read'. It featured articles, 'On Tyrannicide', 'On Spies and Informers', 'On Emigration' and 'On the Rights of Women'. One of its later issues has a Monumental Inscription designed for John Bradshaw, the regicide who 'Presided in the illustrious band of Heroes and Patriots who openly and fairly adjudg'd Charles Stuart, Tyrant of England to public and exemplary death'.[1] It also included two chapters of 'Desultory Observations on The Robbers' by Taylor, which are easily the fullest comments to appear on Schiller's play in any British periodical of the decade. Again the circulation seems likely to have been very limited though a three volume compression of the periodical was published in 1795.

It is not easy to understand why a play with the charm and novelty of Taylor's Nathan the Wise could not have at least taken its place among the many closet plays published each year in London. The only excuse for Taylor's secretive behaviour is the witheringly sarcastic review which it finally achieved from the Edinburgh Review in 1806. But it could hardly have fared as badly at, for instance, the hands of the Monthly Mirror in 1798, when Kotzebue was being praised almost as a regular monthly feature. In any case it is apparent from Taylor's

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1. The Cabinet, published as 3 vols. (Norwich, 1795), iii, 175.

behaviour in these early nineties that he was not lacking in courage, only perhaps in confidence.

The plot of Nathan is complex and the play is impressive in spite of its Mozartian deviosity. To put it as briefly as possible, it tells of a young Templar who has been taken prisoner by Saladin and then mysteriously spared from execution. Wandering Jerusalem on a kind of parole he rescues Recha, daughter of the rich Jew Nathan, from a fire and she falls in love with him. Saladin and his sister Sittah discuss religion with the Jew Nathan, who emerges as an intelligent deist. The wicked Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem plots Nathan's downfall but is frustrated in a very complex,though not action-packed, unravelling. Finally it emerges that both the Templar and Recha, the supposed daughter of Nathan, are the children of Saladin's lost brother and therefore cannot marry.

German novels of Lessing's time had an obssession with the Incest theme,[1] and Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review mocked this element of the plot. In fact it is not central in Nathan and its treatment is wholly innocent. The brother and sister are delighted to find that their love for each other was instinctive. The whole plays moves on a level of optimistic fantasy and poetry which contradicts the implications of the events, very much in the way Fry's The Lady's not for burning spins a web of Spring theme verse around the proposed burning of a young witch.

To retain this mood Taylor devised a relaxed, colloquial blank verse that permits bantering humour and homely imagery, yet never for a moment suggests Lady Hotspur in Jerusalem. The lines only begin with capital letters if they open with a sentence; enjambement and caesura are frequent but never in a continued Miltonic pattern. Often the

1. Two of these were translated very early into English and will be examined in a later chapter: C.F. Gellert's The History of the Swedish Countess Of G. was translated 1752 and J.G. Pfeil's Memoirs of the Count of P. in 1767. Both were published in London.

lines verge into prose rhythms:

Saladin) Let him be called. Sittah, you was not wrong;
I seem to recollect I was unmindful -
a little absent. One isn't always willing
to dwell upon some shapeless bits of wood
coupled with no idea.[1]

but are not nervous of poetic effect:

.....he has found out the tombs
of Solomon and David, knows the word
that lifts their marble lids, and thence obtains
the golden oil that feeds his shining pomp.[2]

Interestingly opposed to the relaxed and conversational lines are passages of intense compression, jerky, intellectual, curiously suggestive of Browning in his Rabbi Ben Ezra vein, with aphorism and paradox:

Al Hafi) What! and is't not cheating,
thus to oppress mankind by hundred thousands,
to squeeze, grind, plunder, butcher and torment,
and act philanthropy to individuals?[3]

Interjection and unexpected syntax are frequent:

Recha) Where have you been? where you perhaps
ought not -
That is not well.

Templar) Up-how d'ye call the mountain?
up Sinai.

Recha) Oh that's very fortunate.
Now I shall learn for certain, if t'is true

Templar) What! If the spot may yet be seen where Moses
stood before God; when first

Recha) No, no, not that.
Where e'erhe stood, 'twas before God. Of this
I know enough already'.[4]

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1. G.E. Lessing, Nathan the Wise (Norwich 1791, London 1805), p.70 Translated by W. Taylor.
2. Ibid, p.89.
3. Ibid, p.39.
4. Ibid, p. 128.121.(mis print).

This flexible verse is able to carry, with a mixture of charm, whimsicality and intellectual seriousness, a very effective attack on the whole idea of Faith. The most famous passage is Nathan's parable of the opal ring of truth claimed by three brothers who represent Christianity, Mahometanism and Jewry. Two replicas are made of the true ring but no one can tell the replicas from the true and so it will remain to the Day of Judgement. But not all the play is in this tone of bland compromise. Sittah attacks the militancy of christianity with a small 'c':

> ..... 'Tis this people's pride
> not to be men, but to be christians. Even
> what of humane their founder felt, and taught,
> and left to savour their fond superstition,
> they value not because it is humane,
> lovely, and good for man; they only prize it
> because 'twas Christ who taught it, Christ who did it,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Tis not his virtues, but his name alone
> they wish to thrust upon us - Tis his name
> which they desire should overspread the world
> should swallow up the name of all good men,
> and put the best to shame.'[1]

This is strong stuff, particularly in an England gripped by a Low Church or Methodistical cant where every other magazine writer seemed compelled to pay lip service to an unthinking orthodoxy. The Jews receive the same stimulating treatment:

> Templar) .....and yet, I trust, you know the nation,
> that first began to strike at fellow men,
> that first baptiz'd itself the chosen people -
> How now if I were - not to hate this people,
> yet for its pride could not forebear to scorn it,
> the pride which it to musulman and christian
> bequeath'd as were its God alone the true one.[2]

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1. Nathan the Wise (Norwich, 1791), p.72.
2. Ibid, p.103.

This was a play forged in a nation split by Protestant and Catholic divisions, where thinking people had been obliged to face the certainty that everyone was wrong. Insular Britain could still dismiss such a problem with the Gordon Riots and keep up a confident Protestant facade. Cant was, if anything, to be a stronger force in nineteenth century Britain than it had been in the eighteenth, but no process is irreversible, London would have been an intellectually healthier capital with Nathan in the repertory of its theatres, or at least on its book shelves: 'The worst of superstitions is to think one's own most bearable.'[1]

Its verse seems, at first, to be at some remove from 'Lenora.' In fact Taylor was using the dynamic of ordinary language in both. The one is rhymed and rhythmic, the other uses speech rhythms; both represent a healthy move to link poetry with the language people normally use. Nathan is a much more original achievement than 'Lenora' because Percy's Reliques was the original source for Bürger's devices but English dramatic blank verse at this time was helplessly trapped somewhere between Shakespeare and Milton. None of the five great English Romantic poets produced a verse medium as actable as the one which Taylor devised in English in an effort to convey the foreign mood and quality of Lessing's writing.

It is not very helpful to examine Jeffrey's review of 1806 because reviews written in the intellectual climate of 1790 and 1791 would obviously have been more generous. The Terror had not taken place to rouse an intellectual counter-revolution. But Taylor's defence of Nathan in the Monthly Magazine of November 1806 proves how completely he understood the function of the verse he was translating and it shows his contempt, not only for contemporary theatrical dialogue, but even for some of Shakespeare's.[2]

1. Nathan the Wise (Norwich, 1791), p.204.
2. But Taylor's lack of self confidence is evident in one of his letters to Southey: 'I agree with Jeffrey in most things about Nathan and am well satisfied with his reviewal'. Robberds, ii, p.135. The letter was written 3 June 1806.

Jeffrey's attack on the dialogue had taken the form of praising it liberally and justly, then suddenly reversing into a series of sarcastic Swiftian aphorisms.

'The dialogue is the most familiar and natural imaginable, and the metaphors and figures which are introduced the most humble and homely. There is a vein of innocent jocularity which runs through the whole drama ... The personages are all very quick and snappish withal, without ever subjecting themselves to the agitation of the greater passions; and the author has contrived most ingeniously to produce a drama, which has all the levity of comedy, without its wit or vivacity, and all the extravagence of tragedy, without its passion or its poetry.'[1]

What really upset Jeffrey was that Lessing's antidote for religious intolerance was 'absolute indifference, or infidelity'[2] and, given Jeffrey's position, Lessing's play was a very serious assault on it, no less serious for being lightly humorous.

Taylor defended the play's dialogue as

'.... well adapted to its office: it is distinguished by an idiomatic ordinariness of diction which has been praised for its simplicity, which has been censured for its vulgarity: the statelier style of tragedy would ill have suited the gentle emotion and philosophical conversation of Saladin's family; nor would the witty style of comedy have been proper in the midst of feelings so exquisite and discussion so momentous.'[3]

and complained shrewdly about the conventions of his age:

'a classical simplicity of diction is not borne at the English Theatre; we prefer affection to insipidity: we require to be stimulated

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1. Edinburgh Review VIII (1806), p.151.
2. Ibid, p.150.
3. Monthly Magazine, XXIV (1807), p.339.

although at the expense of probability of dialogue: and are grateful to our Shakespeare even when he tricks out his characters with the tinsel of misplaced wit or with turgid purple passages of crackling bombast.'[1]

If this had been written in the play's 'Preface' to stir debate in 1791, then Wordsworth and Coleridge might have written The Borderers and Osorio differently.[2] Taylor's record proves that it is not enough to be a perceptive critic or a sensitive poet; you must be an aggressive propagandist with a sense of timing.

Taylor's one other translation of a play in this decade was an anti-climax after Nathan. Anonymously, as usual, he had printed at the Norfolk Press in 1793,(for J. Johnson, Fuseli's friend, to publish), Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris a Tragedy.[3] This translation is considered more fully in an earlier chapter on Goethe. The translation had neither introduction nor preface. It was noticed politely in a few reviews and then virtually forgotten. Taylor made an error in choosing the play to represent Goethe's work. The play is positively moral. It reworks a theme of classical tragedy, giving it a credible happy ending by expanding the human decency and basic rationality of the chief characters. As Taylor translated the play it is not a tragedy; it is relieved by no humour or any kind of lightness. In fact it is gently boring, with long speeches and little action. Boring, worthy plays do not spearhead a literary movement.

Unaccountably, after his sensitivity to the textures of Bürger and Lessing, Taylor failed with Goethe's dialogue. Though the lay-out is as uncapitaled and as relaxed in appearance as Nathan's, the blank verse of his Iphigenia is stilted and conventional, Taylor has

1. Monthly Magazine, XXIV (1807), p.337.
2. Yet Wordsworth must have read Taylor's Nathan and been criticising it obliquely when he described Nathan to Klopstock as 'tedious'.
3. 'La traduction de Taylor fut réimprimée à Berlin en 1794 mais passa inaperçue à Londres'. Jean Marie Carré, Goethe en Angleterre (Paris, 1920), p.21.

lost his feeling for the natural. It is worth speculating at this point quite what practical feeling for the stage Taylor actually possessed. Nathan as translated is eminently an actable play but probably only because Taylor had preserved Lessing's theatrical qualities. Iphigenia in Taylor's translation could only have been intended as a closet play, and a very specialised one. Without an explanatory introduction it would only have been enjoyed by scholars of Greek who could appreciate the subtle, optimistic warping of the original story and the declamatory formalised dialogue. In this respect Iphigenia recalls Robert Lloyd's translation of Klopstock's The Death of Adam; but Lloyd provided his play with an introduction to emphasise the Sophoclean undertones. Iphigenia was a scholar's choice, not the choice of a man who hoped to influence productions on the London stage. By 1793 Taylor appears already to be turning away from the rough and tumble of the active world of writing. His reviewing career was just opening up and the standpoint of his future critical reviews may well have been that of the closet and not the pit.[1]

One unfortunate effect of Taylor's translation of Iphigenia was that it chilled his feelings for Goethe. Goethe never acknowledged the copy of the translation which Taylor sent to him. This was ungracious. Perhaps he still remembered not being addressed as 'Geheimder Rath' (sic) back in 1783. Schiller wrote a polite comment to Goethe about his copy: 'The English Iphigenie pleased me very much. As far as I can judge, this foreign garment suits the play and one is vividly reminded of the close relationship between the two languages.'[2]

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1. Taylor himself claimed, Monthly Magazine, XXIV (1807), p.338, that Nathan 'was evidently intended for readers more than hearers', though he knew of its success on the German stage.
2. Quoted in R.D. Ashton's thesis, The reception of German literature in England from the founding of Blackwood's Magazine (1817) to the time of Carlyle and his disciples. Cambridge (1974), p.187. Her translation is from Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe in den Jahren 1794 bis 1805, 6 vols. in 3 (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1828-9), i, 39. Schiller's letter was dated 12 September 1794.

Perhaps Goethe had been better able to judge, found the translation flaccid and chose to avoid mere courtesy. Whatever the reason, Taylor did not offer another translation of Goethe to the British reading public until July 1798, and then only three short poems. Old Dr. Griffiths, the editor of the Monthly Review, actually wrote to Taylor, 10 May 1798, asking him to review Herman and Dorothea:

> a friend of mine, a German, who much admires and somehow distinguishes your articles, wishes that you would review a new poem of great merit, entitled Herman and Dorothea.[1]
> by Goethe

But Taylor made no response to this flattering request. A full review of the poem with some sensitive passages of translation would have been topical and influential in this year. Wordsworth was actually requesting information about 'the merit of Goethe's new poem' the following December, as if he realised that Goethe had worked over ground which he also found attractive. The English had to wait for Holcroft's lame translation of 1801. Taylor would have done better, particularly as the poem was written in his favourite hexameters.

This five year interval when British interest in German literature was at its strongest was not well timed for Taylor, for Goethe, or for the reading public. The failure of Germany's greatest poet to reach any relationship with England's best translator of German poetry was one of the factors that made Anglo German interaction in the 1790s more bizarre than fruitful.

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1. Robberd s Memoir (London, 1843), i, 143.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Promise unsustained - the record of William Taylor's reviews and later translations, 1793-1800

According to Robberds, who was not always reliable, Taylor wrote two hundred reviews or articles for the Monthly Review between 1793 and 1799, when he was sacked by the new editor, G.E. Griffiths, ostensibly because he refused to accept criticism of his 'habit of employing words and forms of construction which were not sanctioned or not current in our language'.[1] But in the middle of his Monthly Review period Taylor's friend, Dr. Aikin, had helped to found a rival periodical, and from 1796 Taylor was also contributing to this, the Monthly Magazine.

Most of his contributions to the Monthly Review were reviews on a wide range of books, by no means all to do with Germany. A number of his German reviews were of books which had not been translated into English.

To the more sympathetic Monthly Magazine, whose literary editor was Dr. Aikin, Taylor usually contributed translations of German poems or essays, or sometimes his own verse experiments. So his work for the two magazines differed in character and will be considered separately.

A minister at Norwich's Octagon Chapel, Dr. Enfield, was an earlier contributer to the Monthly Review and it was he who introduced William Taylor to the elder Griffiths, who was then editor and with whom Taylor had good relations. Taylor's first piece, in the April issue of 1793 was a panegyric upon his friend, Frank Sayers's Disquisitions: 'more chaste and more precise than Burke, and free from the whimsical spirit of Hogarth, Dr. Sayers has excelled his predecessors.....'[2], which was no very promising

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1. Robberds, Memoir (London, 1843), i, 198. But Southey, a friend of Taylor thought the same: 'You have ruined your style by Germanisms, Latinisms, and Greekisms'. Robberds, i, 452.
2. Monthly Review, X (1793), p.374.

augury of Taylor's critical standards. These remained, in fact, uneven and sometimes commonplace over the next six years.

While there is little doubt about the authorship of this piece, some of Robberds's attributions are suspect. He claimed that Taylor had 'distinguished the papers furnished by himself' in his own copies, but Taylor must sometimes have marked erratically. For instance Robberds attributes a review of an untranslated Kotzebue play Brother Maurice in Volume XXVI, 1798 to Taylor.[1] Whoever wrote the review claimed also to have reviewed five other Kotzebue plays: The Negro Slaves, The Indian in England, History of an Orphan, Misanthropy and Repentance and Count Benyowski; but Robberds only records one of these for Taylor; The Negro Slaves. Robberds also attributes to Taylor the review in Volume XXII, 1796, p.184-189 of the Burger translation 'Ellenore.' In fact this, by the clearest internal evidence, is one of a series of revues on Burger translations by Dr. Aikin. Taylor must have marked it simply because it related to his work.

If any distinguishing note can be detected in the reviews attributed to Taylor it is that they contrive to sound nervous, even frightened, about the social dangers of the horror novels and Schiller's plays. They tend to be happiest and most enthusiastic about the safe whimsies and truisms of Wieland, and they criticise the style, not the ideas, of 'difficult' thinkers like Herder and Kant. The general impression which the Taylor articles give is not one of zeal for German writing. His mood seems to have been settling into that expressed in a letter to Southey, dated 23 December 1798.

> 'All the new publications are trash. The poetry, translated - the novels, hocus pocus tricks - metaphysics, the jargon of Kant - morals, the barbarism of French licentiousness - history, mere catalogues of old books. The sunset of German literature is come'[2].

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1. Monthly Review, XXVI (1798) p.531.
2. Quoted in Robberds's Memoir, i, 236-37. The letter is, to an extent, only a reflection of the views of Stephen Weaver Brown.

Taylor was dismissing 'the jargon of Kant' late in 1798, yet there had been two exact accounts of Kant's 'Fundamental Principles of pure Practical Reason' in the periodicals in 1796. The first, 'by a Disciple of Kant' was in the February number of the 'English Review'[1]. This may have been written by Thomas Beddoes who contributed a letter on Kant's philosophy next month, 28 March 1796, to the Monthly Magazine. In its December issue the Monthly Magazine[2] printed a shorter article on Kant by F.A. Nitsch who had been giving a series of lectures on the 'Critic of Speculative Reason' at No. 16, Panton Square Haymarket and published, in this same year, A General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles concerning man, the world and the Deity 'submitted to the consideration of the learned' (London, 1796).

The English Review printed the whole 'Prospectus' of Nitsch's lectures and intended to give a much fuller account of his book, but this volume of 1796 was its last. In its second, April, article on Kant the Review dealt superficially with his 'Criticism of Speculative Reason'. It pointed out nervously that Kant had identified certain 'delusions of reason' which would not only 'spread a degree of confusion and inconsistency' over all areas of theoretical knowledge except mathematics but have a tendency to:

> enlarge the empire of scepticism, to weaken our belief in God and the immortality of the soul ... and to suggest a pretext for excusing almost all sorts of wickedness.[3]

However, the Review had already let the Genii out of the bottle in its February issue by printing the four Propositions, two Problems and two Corollarium of Kant's Fundamental Principles. These may explain Taylor's attitude in his letter to Southey, as they require familiarity with a private terminology.

1. English Review, XXVII (1796), pp.106-11, 354-7.
2. Monthly Magazine, II (1796), pp.702-5.
3. English Review, XXVII (1796, p.355.

Such an attitude is not so surprising considering Taylor's early record of translations. His one real success, Lenora, may have been written to match Harold's Hearse Songs and the other Gothick pasticherie of Sayers's Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology and not to satisfy Taylor's own tastes at all. Nathan the Wise is in no way Sturm und Drang in feeling but a pure work of the Enlightenment, almost dated in feeling by the nineties. Finally Iphigenia is a classically shaped celebration of the triumph of Reason over Barbarism. Taylor may well have begun to feel old for his times. Significantly his friend Sayers had resigned from the Norwich Speculative Society in September 1791, after reading a paper, 'In what does beauty consist?' He then moved back into the Church of England (out of which Taylor had originally argued him), bought a horse and gig and took up the study of church architecture. A later essay of Sayers, 'Hints on English Architecture' reveals a total confusion between Saxon and Norman forms.

Taylor's 1794 review in the Monthly Review of the novel Herman of Unna by 'Professor Kramer' (as Benedikte Naubert chose to call herself) reads not unlike contemporary complaints about the probable effects of violence on television.

> 'this class of stories.....by familiarising characters of a stronger sinew than are common, crimes of a bolder enormity, and modes of coercion which the tolerance of a polished age had renounced...tend to suggest a revival of the heroic in virtue, and in vice, and to prepare the general mind for contemplating, with complacence, a sort of characters, the influence of which may not prove very compatible with the 'monotonous tranquility of modern states'[1].

which, if prim, was percipient. He quoted four pages of the dramatic scene where Ida appears before her masked accusers and the bell tolls, an episode later reproduced in James Boaden's play The Secret Tribunal 1795, based on this novel.

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1. Monthly Review, XV (1794), p.28.

The first page of this review of Taylor's was a plaintive appeal for what he considered worthy German writing as opposed to sensational trash like, apparently, Herman of Unna.

> 'if we have hitherto been made acquainted only with the Agathon even of Wieland,and have still to wish for the Golden Mirror and Peregrinus Proteus of that fascinating writer; if we have only a feeble and defective translation of Goethe's Werter; if the Ghost Seer, the Wandering Jew,and others,are not even commonly known by name among us.....'[1]

Yet when the Monthly Review came to review The Ghost Seer in 1795 Schiller's work was briefly and coldly dismissed with: 'his name is sufficient to introduce even a second rate work to general attention'[2]. Consistency is not a quality expected from editors, nevertheless the Bodleian copy marks this second review as Taylor's also.

Taylor's attitude to Schiller's plays was guarded and uneven in the reviews he wrote for Dr Griffiths in the Monthly Review. He was not associated with that magazine early enough to have reviewed Die Räuber. Indeed there is some uncertainty as to whether he ever reviewed Tytler's translation during the nineties.

L.A. Willoughby in his article 'English Translations and Adaptations of Schiller's Robbers' states[3] that the article 'Desultory Observations on The Robbers', which appeared in the Norwich weekly The Cabinet, probably in 1794, was written by Taylor and re-used by him thirty six years later in his Historic Survey of German Poetry[4]. This is not correct. The translation of Francis's vision in the Historic Survey is quite unlike the translation of the same passage in The Cabinet and the criticisms of the play in the two responses are completely different in wording, tone and emphasis. In the Historic Survey Taylor is confidently appreciative of paradox and excess:

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1. Monthly Review, XV (1794), p.21.
2. Ibid, XVIII (1795), p.346. The review is attributed to Taylor by marginalia in the Bodleian copy, which was the Editor's.
3. L.A. Willoughby, 'English Translations and Adaptations of Schiller's Robbers', MLR, XVI (1921), 297-315 (p.299).
4. Taylor, Historic Survey (1830), iii, 173.

'the diction harmonizes marvellously with the convulsionary movement of the incidents: it stalks about for metaphors on giant limbs, and writhes with the agonies of passion and emotion'. The writer in The Cabinet is much less confident. He debates the 'frequent violations of the grand unities both of time and place', makes several quotations to suggest that Schiller, or Tytler, had been influenced by the style of Ossian, and draws frequent parallels with scenes in Shakespeare. Above all The Cabinet writing is fascinated by the subtleties of female psychology and comments on Amelia's 'How sweet - how delicious, the curse of a dying father':

> He who can read this passage without the strongest emotions - without feeling his blood run cold through every vein - may close the book, and seek amusement in a mathematical proposition.[1]

It is not impossible that Taylor wrote The Cabinet review. Its circulation in a Norwich weekly would not have been large but selections from the journal were printed in three volumes in 1795, so it would have had some influence. Certainly it is as full and interesting as any of the reviews in the London periodicals. Robberds in the Memoir writes[2] that 'during the year 1794 he (Taylor) furnished some papers to The Cabinet', but the review, with its reference to 'Sir Bertrand,' its obsession with Ossian and its savouring of female distress is as reminiscent of The Speculator as of Taylor. There is also a puzzling error in Taylor's 1830 review when he writes of 'the English translation of The Robbers (executed, it is believed, by H. Mackenzie Esq. of Edinburgh)'. This slip does not breed confidence in Taylor's unsupported attribution of the German sections of The Speculator to 'Dr Ash'.[3]

This favourable review in a militantly republican weekly would deepen

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1. The Cabinet (Norwich 1795), i, 88.
2. Memoir, i, 59.
3. Historic Survey, iii, 178.

right wing critics' suspicions of Schiller. In his reviews for the Monthly Review Taylor is much more reserved. He contributed major reviews of Cabal and Love in 1795 (Boosey's bowdlerised version), Fiesco in 1796 and the two versions of Don Carlos in 1799. In these the parallels with Ossian are dropped and those with Shakespeare dwindle. Instead he sees the German dramatists through classical spectacles: Schiller as Aeschylus, 'distinguished by his daring energy', Lessing as Sophocles, 'by his studious completeness' and Goethe as Euripides,'by his heart felt tenderness',[1] but the Cabal and Love review reveals some distaste for 'daring energy':

> 'His language strains with incessant effort:- his stage is ever crowded with incident and scattered with carcases:- his characters verge on caricature: the personages are not so much men as angels and devils; and,like academic figures, they are displayed in perpetual contortion.'[2]

1. Monthly Review, XVII(1795), p.310.
2. Ibid, p.310.

which is a nervous reaction to one of Schiller's least violent plays. Its translator is praised as a 'colourist less harsh' for his modifications to the text. Schiller, Taylor concluded, 'requires to be translated with peculiar caution and ought perhaps, entirely to please to be somewhat enfeebled and softened down.'

This is not the reaction of a bold aesthetic radical; but it may have been significant that, in his letters from Paris in 1790, an aspect of the Revolution which particularly pleased Taylor was 'the splendid procession of the Fête Dieu. The king and queen had never before performed in Paris this office of devotion. The National Assembly having just reformed the clergy, and being anxious to quiet uneasy consciences about their religious views, agreed to attend in a body'.[1] He gave the impression of being a radical innovator only by reason, emotionally and aesthetically he was a moderate.

The Fiesco review is worthier of Taylor, who was himself a sensitive translator with an ear for virile language. Taylor attacked the translators, Noehden and Stoddart for mealymouthedness.

> 'In the original, Verrina, in the phrenzy of despair, says to his daughter - 'Genoa's liberty is lost! - Fiesco is lost! - Do thou turn Whore!' The unlettered muse of Schiller, like the energetic muse of Shakespeare (Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore Othello) disdained to use any but the strongest term, the most expressively appropriate to his apprehension in the moment of accumulated distress. Our timid translators have substituted -
> 'And thou may'st become a prey to dishonour!
> This may be decent but it is not tragical.'[2]

The schizoid nature of Taylor's own style is perfectly revealed in this. In the very paragraph when he is urging bare, Saxon directness he employs the mouth filling Latinisms of, 'most expressively appropriate

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1. Robberds, Memoir (1843), i.73.
2. Monthly Review, XXII (1797), p.206

to his apprehension in the moment of accumulated distress'. Later he shrinks from Schiller's character creations 'in all the nakedness of nature', characters 'which neither sex nor decorum may be supposed to restrain'. It was quite illogical for him to urge the 'Whore' translation and then to complain because Duke Doria's niece vents 'her spite and triumphs with all the vulgar insolence of a favoured chamber maid'[1], but he reacted in this way because he was caught half way between two literary ethical systems.

In the Don Carlos twin reviews he was happier. Though he wished the translations had been in blank verse he praised Noehden and Stoddard because their version had 'the taste of the soil' as opposed to Richardson's 'more free and more castrated work'.[2] The radical side to his nature enjoyed the hints of the Prince Regent and Fox in Don Carlos and Marquis Posa.

So his Schiller reviews for this London periodical were inconsistent. Though he wrote with some feeling for bold directness of language he seemed to feel bound to express moral reservations about the plays and these reflect the views of a cautious editor, not his own sincere reactions. Consequently he can have done little to advance Schiller's cause in Britain.

Between 1795 and 1796, however, he devoted three long reviews to an attempt to popularise Wieland's works in Britain, though most of these works had still to be translated. The fact that Wieland 'seldom mounts to sublimity' seemed to be in his favour. In place of sublimity he admired 'his elegant erudition and philosophical penetration'. 'Few writers have so uniformly walked in the precincts of the beautiful'[3], 'he delights to detain the imagination beneath groves redolent of a thousand flowers.'[4]

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1. Monthly Review, XXII (1797), p.206.
2. Monthly Review, XXIX (1799), p.148.
3. Monthly Review, XVIII (1795), p.522.
4. According to Robberds, Memoir, i, 148, William Taylor printed four of Wieland's Dialogues of the Gods in 1795 and wrote a Preface promising more, but he received little encouragement. One later appeared in the Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.509. Robberds mentions that Wieland was Taylor's 'favourite author', i, 148.

The approach to character study which Taylor appreciated was Wieland's in Agathon[1]: a leisurely gentlemanly discourse which 'offers a gratification analagous to studying a character of Shakespeare anatomized by Richardson, with, 'the full display of Agathon's mind', and, 'the analysis of its several psychological phenomena.'[2] Taylor would have enjoyed George Eliot. There is further insight into the conventional side of his nature in the aphorisms which he quotes from Agathon: truisms like:

> 'that man must revolve in an eternal cycle from royal despotism and aristocratic insolence, to popular licentiousness and mob tyranny'.
>
> 'he saw legislation, administration, and police, everywhere full of defects and abuses· but he also saw that men without laws, administration or police were worse and more unhappy.'[3]

The contradiction within Taylor was that, though his mind was obviously becoming more and more staid, he remained theoretically loyal to his old radical associations. As the controversy grew over Abbé Barruel's[4] scare, claiming a pan-European plot by the Illuminati to overturn all states and nations, Taylor persistently used the columns of the Monthly Review to fight Barruel:

> 'Of this German ghost he makes a most terrific scare-crow, by dressing it out in the blood sprinkled garb of his own country, and by tacking to its train a wholly disconnected catalogue of anecdotes of French villainy, French perfidy, French cruelty, and French atrocity'.

To claim as Taylor did in 1798 that he knew and liked many of the Illumines, and thought them 'Men eminent for talent, for knowledge, for official weight and for personal character'[5], was an act of courage and may well be the hidden reason why the younger Griffiths eased him out of the periodical in the next year.

Taylor's reviews of Kotzebue hardly deserved Carlyle's attack on them. Not only was Kotzebue never as inferior to contemporary German

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1. This had been translated into English as long ago as 1773.
2. Monthly Review, XVIII (1795), p.524.
3. Ibid, p.525.
4. Memoirs illustrating the History of Jacobinism (London, 1797).
5. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.510.

playwrights as radical opinion-shapers later suggested, but Taylor's actual reviews of him are mild, just and perceptive, certainly never partisan enough to justify Carlyle's handling of this issue.[1]

In a 1796 review of Negro Slaves Taylor gave his first, nervous, imperceptive introduction to Kotzebue's work: 'plays which, like some of our sentimental dramas, intentionally excite alternate laughter and sorrow; and the personages have mostly the manners and language of elegant middle life, removed alike from the rant of tragedy or the slang of farce'[2]. He underrated Negro Slaves itself, calling it 'a dramatic poem' and characteristically wishing that the alternative milder conclusion to the play had been the only ending. He found the blood bath of Kotzebue's preferred finale 'fittest for the closet'.[3] But that was Taylor's mood in 1796. By 1798, when Kotzebue mania in England was at its height, Taylor had mellowed and was asking 'does all the patient art of Lessing attain the glow of Kotzebue's rapidity?' and declaring that his dialogue was 'written with a vivacity & variety, and a boldness of appeal to the fairest sentiments and dearest feelings of our natures, which never fail to arrest attention, to captivate sensibility, and to provoke applause'[4], which was no more than the truth.

Taylor seems to have sensed a fellow Radical in Kotzebue because, after a slight censure of the morality in Lovers' Vows he praised ' a lofty indifference to artificial distinctions, a catching spirit of disinterest and benevolence', though he still found that the scenes were 'loosely connected and excite no progressive anxiety, nor is the story probable'.[5]

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1. Edinburgh Review, LIII (1831), p.175-6.
2. Monthly Review, XX (1796), p.543.
3. Ibid, p.546.
4. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.580.
5. Monthly Review, XXIX (1799), p.103.

On the weight of these remarks he can hardly be accused of having been swept away by the Kotzebue tide. Physical violence seems to have shocked Taylor far more than sexual permissiveness'[1] and he made a curiously veiled comment on Kotzebue's Maurice, a highly permissive drama of group marriage on the Pellew Islands. 'These dramas are too well written not to be read once, 'but it depended on 'those who wish well to public morality' whether the plays 'should shortly be dismissed as a fashion', or 'prolonged by listening to them with persevering applause'[2]. It is reasonable to suggest that in the 1790s Kotzebue's plays would be more relevant to the light-weight English theatre goers than the plays of Goethe or Schiller. Taylor's reviews of him suggest just this, no more and no less.

All these Monthly Review articles add up to a very modest middle-of-the-road contribution to English knowledge of German literature. If they had not been written by the translator of 'Lenora' they would hardly have been noticed. If Taylor could be accused of anything it would be of lack of enthusiasm. Sotheby's Oberon, for sheer effort, probably deserved more than: 'rendered faithfully enough but somewhat diffusely', 'although the natural conciseness of our language rather invited compression'. It did not help English readers to be told 'the poem of Oberon has affected us less in its English than in its German garb';[3] though it may have been true. On the whole Taylor seems to have been becoming disenchanted with German writing. Reviewing Neubeck's poems he complained of a vice in German linguistics which he called 'trailing':

'German versifiers seem to employ more syllables, more and longer words, more and longer lines, more stanzas,to exite a given series of imagery in the fancy,than those of Italy or of England. This is perhaps

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1. He hailed Walpole's play of incest, The Mysterious Mother as 'one of those works of art to which genius has affixed the stamp of immortality', M.R, XXIII (1797), p.248.
2. Monthly Review, XXVI (1798), p.535.
3. Ibid p.567.

a fault of their language, which Schiller, Bürger, and Klopstock have eluded only by harsh constructions'[1]. This seems an ungenerous response to what he had learnt from Bürger. Aikin was more just in his review of Taylor's 'Lenora' when he admired 'the familiarity of the dialogue, and the licence of coining words that echo to the sense'[2], tricks which Taylor could not have acquired from English versifiers of the closing century but only from a 'German versifier'.

A final weakness of Taylor's reviews was his lack of intellectual energy.[3]. Though he translated a passage of Kant for his review of his Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful he declared that the book was not worth reading and gave the impression that he had not read much of it himself by his petulant complaint: 'its subjective is as slight as its objective worth', 'his empirical acquaintance with works of taste is not comprehensive; his receptivity for aesthetic gratification not delicate'[4]. Herder seems similarly to have baffled him. His comment on Scattered Leaves is stylistic and attempts no account of Herder's ideas.

'A fund of reason, not to say scepticism, lurks at the bottom of all these productions: but they are written in a style so mystical, so Oriental, so hyperbolic and so affected, that they have mostly passed with the rational world for the wild esctasies, of devout enthusiasm'.[5]

An intelligent reader was entitled to ask for at least a précis of this fund of reason and scepticism, but Taylor supplied only some acceptable generalisations about Shakespeare.

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1. M.R., XX (1796), p.549.
2. M.R., XXII (1797), p.187.
3. See R.D. Ashton's thesis The reception of German Literature in England (Cambridge, 1974). p.177.
4. M.R., XXV (1798), p.585.
5. Monthly Review, XIX (1796), p.580.

The 'style of philosophical criticism' which Hazlitt credited Taylor with having invented was very short on philosophy. Even his range of comparison was restricted to the Greek and Latin writers of the standard educated man and to Shakespeare, Otway and Ossian. He demonstrated virtually no interest in contemporary English or Scottish writers.

The Bodleian has the editorial set of the Monthly Review for these years with Griffiths's own notes indicating the authors of the reviews. Robberds credits Taylor with the reviews of Herder's Von Gottes Sohn, Von Geist des Christenthums and Von Religion, Lehrmeynungen, und Gebräuchen in the Appendix of the twenty seventh volume[1]; but Griffiths's note makes it quite clear that Taylor only wrote the flowery introductory sentences on Herder's general style which Robberds quotes admiringly. The translations from Von Go ttes Sohn and all the other Herder reviews are by Tooke. This suggests that Taylor was not even trusted to translate a philosophical work but was employed to write ornate antithetical introductions like: 'He binds his brow, indeed, with the clusters of Engedi, strews along his path the roses of Sharon,and culls the sweetest lilies of the valley of Tirzah: but he employs them rather as the gift of human than of angelic hands, rather as the luxuries of taste than of faith.'[2]

This same appendix contains several other very suggestive indications of the role which Taylor played in this magazine. None of them are indications that he was rated highly as an intellectual or even as a specialist in German literature. There is a sixteen page review by Taylor of the Abbé Barruel's Memoirs illustrating the History of Jacobinism[3]; this is a defence of Illuminism and an attack upon Barruel. He also reviewed an anonymous

1. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), pp565-70.
2. Ibid, p.566.
3. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), pp.509-24.

Histoire de la Révolution de France[1] and, immediately after Tooke's Herder reviews, Meine letzte Reise nach Paris ie My last Journey to Paris[2]. These suggest that he was seen by Griffiths as an expert on France with markedly Girondist sympathies. What is even more significant is that just before his aureate introduction to Herder is a review of J.H. Voss's Luise, a Pastoral Poem in three Idyls[3]. Taylor actually translated some of Voss's work for the Monthly Magazine[4] but this review is by Beddoes[5] and it was Beddoes who, in this same Appendix, contributed the long, enthusiastic review, with generous translated extracts of Goethe's William Meister's Apprenticeship[6]. If Beddoes was reviewing Goethe at length while Taylor was merely busying himself with articles like those previously mentioned and Hints concerning the Old and New Constitution of Germany[7], Walckenaer's Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Espèce humaine[8], and Peltier's Paris during the year 1798[9], it does not appear that Taylor was a figure of much importance as an interpreter of German literature for intelligent English readers. He was, so Robberds relates, not allowed to choose what books he was to review. He merely waited in Norwich for a parcel to arrive from Griffiths in London and then set out to work. But, as he had shown no enthusiasm for writing a review of Goethe's Herman and Dorothea when Griffiths suggested it, the French bias may well have been of his own choosing.

Taylor's contributions to the Monthly Magazine from the time of its

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1. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), p.508.
2. Ibid p.570.
3. Ibid p.564.
4. Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), pp.139-40.
5. Thomas Beddoes M.D. a Medical Theorist who began reviews for Griffiths in 1793.
6. Monthly Review, XXVII (1798), pp.543-51.
7. Ibid, p.542.
8. Ibid, p.525.
9. Ibid, p.554.

first issue, January 1796 until December 1798, when Robberds's list of Taylor's contributions ends, are part of an intensively worked field of literary study. The whole area of the Lyrical Ballads, September 1798, is criss-crossed with the trenches of research. Everything that can be written about Taylor's 'Lenora' has been written: the number of times it was published in 1796, (three), its possible influence on Southey, on Wordsworth, on Coleridge, the respective merits of its four rivals, all have been debated. Only the intellectual and emotional circumstances of its original composition, six years before its publication, have been virtually ignored, and these have been outlined in the previous chapter. Taylor wrote at least seventeen articles, poems, translations and letters for this magazine in the three years 1796-98, and it is worth speculating on what overall scheme he may have had in mind with these writings. When John Aikin helped to launch the Monthly Magazine, Taylor, after years at the beck and command of the Griffith s father and son, found himself with a periodical virtually open to him, the literary editor was a sympathetic, older friend and an admirer of his verse translations. If, then, Taylor had definite feelings about how English and German literature might interact, here he had his opportunity to direct the process.

The Taylor contributions are, in fact, a confusion and a disappointment. His first use of this new vehicle was to let it carry, in February, his worthy but quite unremarkable three part article, 'History of the Jews in England.' Probably Aikin gave him freedom of choice, expecting to be offered the six years old translation which he had always admired; but Taylor, modestly diffident or genuinely unaware of the value of his stylistic experiment, made the kind of gesture that might be expected from a scholar with humane radical sympathies. 'History of the Jews in England' is a reasonable choice as a first offering from the translator of Nathan the Wise: a respectful appreciation of a persecuted people with a strong East

Anglian connection. But it is not the first offering of a man with a mission to inform England of the best contemporary German writing.

Perhaps Aikin remonstrated with him. In the following month, March, Taylor gave the magazine first his definition of Bürger's appeal and then his great 'Lenora' itself, followed in April by 'The Lass of Fair Wone.' The definition, much quoted as an anticipation of Wordsworth's opinion on the correct language for poetry, is notably the definition of a stylistic technician and not of a man interested in emotion, morality or the place of the supernatural in symbolic literature:

> 'Imitative harmony he pursues almost to excess: the onomatopoeia is his prevailing figure; the interjection his favourite part of speech: arrangement, rhythm, sound, rime, are always with him, an echo to the sense. The hurrying vigour of his impetuous diction is unrivalled, yet it is so natural, even in its sublimity, that his poetry is singularly fitted to become national popular song'.[1]

'Pursues almost to excess' and 'impetuous diction', suggest just an echo of Taylor's disapproval, the preceding year in the Monthly Review, of Schiller's 'incessant effort'. German impetuosity seemed to attract and disturb him at one and the same time, but his analysis of Bürger's style for British imitation is precise and practical. In so far as Taylor's analysis and his translation were an influence on later writers it is important to see where his influence was leading. Though he had strong feelings against 'passages too stately and pompous', 'the Darwin style' as he called it in his letter to Walter Scott, what he is admiring here and brilliantly rendering from Bürger is a highly enriched 'poetic' style of poetry. 'Lenora' is poetry with a purged vocabulary but there is nothing 'natural' about it in the sense that Wordsworth's blank verse was 'natural'. On the contrary it is heightened with almost every poetic device available to Anglo Saxons; and many of them are devices which

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1. Monthly Magazine Vol. 1. (1796), p.117-18.

had been sparingly used since Spenser. Wordsworth's carefully simplified and refined blank verse stands at the head of a quite different strain of poetry. Coleridge veered productively between the two approaches. Taylor's 'Lenora' suggested an opposite strain of 'technical' poetry: the 'Ancyent Marinere,' 'Christabel', then Keats, Tennyson, Swinburne. This literary moment in March 1796 is important, and Taylor clearly understood exactly what he was urging. But what his later writing for the Monthly Magazine suggests is that he wholly lacked a sense of critical purpose to follow his moment up and establish a movement. Aikin's pereceptiveness, the sheer memorable quality of 'Lenora's devices and mere chance would have to do the rest.

Since so much is known about his Lenora translation, it is irritating that nothing is recorded about 'The Lass of Fair Wone.' Southey preferred it to 'Lenora', yet the choice of theme: the awful consequences of sexual indiscretion, seems an unlikely one for the tolerant Taylor. But 'The Lass' is a masterpiece compared to Taylor's next two translations of Bürger: 'The Menagerie of the Gods' and 'Pro Patria Mori', published in May 1796. These are both disasters, the last is trite and the first is silly:

> In heaven, where time passes heavily too
> When the gods have no subject to talk on,
> Jove calls for an eagle, he keeps in a mew,
> As an old English baron his falcon.
>
> He lets it jump up on his sofa and chair,
> And dip its crookt beak in his cup;
> And laughs when it pinches young Ganimed's ear,
> Or eats his ambrosia up.[1]

These are so trivial as to call Taylor's judgement into question. The impression is sometimes given as of two different persons writing at different times. Possibly he enjoyed little squibs like these and his fine ballads were only written under Sayers's influence.

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1. Monthly Magazine, Vol.1 (1796), p.313.

The united front which Taylor and Sayers presented on the ballad is demonstrated in a letter from Taylor to Robert Southey, 23 December 1798. Southey had sent Taylor his ballad 'The Old Woman of Berkley' but Taylor's reply is written as if from a critical committee of Sayers and himself, inseparable in their views. They give an excellent definition, not just of Southey's ballad, but of the standards by which Lenora must have been written:

> We both like your ballad infinitely - it is the best possible way of treating the story - it is everything that a ballad should be - old in the costume of the ideas, as well as of the style and metre - in the very spirit of the superstitions of the days of yore - perpetually climbing in interest, and indeed the best original English ballad we know of.[1]

This suggests that, while writing on Wieland or Kotzebue Taylor's views were his own, but when he reacted to ballads he used Sayers's crude and direct judgements.

'Menagerie' and 'Pro Patria' were the last signs that Taylor had any interest in following up his Bürger success. In June his piece for the Monthly Magazine was 'English Hexameter Exemplified'.[2] This suggested that hexameters might become a popular English measure of poetry because the German's 'most celebrated poem The Messiah is written in hexameter verse'.

Already, however, Taylor seems to have become faintly contemptuous about German as a poetic language. In the same year in the Monthly Review he had sneered at the German propensity to multisyllabic constructions, what he called 'trailing'. In his 'English Hexameters' he was equally offensive to German linguistic resources: 'They have been obliged by the scarceness of long vowels and the rifeness of short syllables in their language to tolerate the frequent substitution of trochees to spondees'[2]

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1. Quoted in Robberds's Memoir, i, pp.233-37.
2. Monthly Magazine, I (1796), p.404.

This provoked a tart reply from 'some German literato'[1], as Taylor dismissed him, in the Teutscher Merkur. Actually this was probably Wieland himself who had written, it was his magazine. Next year Taylor took up the challenge with an amiable but farcical linguistic chat about how 'it may perhaps be found expedient to tolerate the revival of the regular genitive ending in '-is', substituting the omitted vowel to the apostrophe, when we are obliged to pronounce it fully, as if Pope had written, 'by young Tellemachusis blooming years', also 'the revival of polysyllabic comparatives: "beauteouser" as well as "happier"'.[2]

All of which was amusing enough, but the fact remained that Taylor's only public exchange with the one German writer whom he unreservedly admired was a futile linguistic quarrel. Taylor had no talent for productive friendship with German writers, which is another reason for his indeterminate position in the Anglo-German exchange. It was particularly ironic that he should have clashed with Wieland as, the very next month after his Hexameter venture, he contributed, July 1796, a careful imitation of Wieland's Dialogues of the Gods[3]. This, like Taylor's Iphigenia translation, indicates how happy he was in a Classical piece of writing. Jupiter, Numa, Apollo and Lelio Socini have a gently witty discourse about how to reform the Catholic clergy 'by restoring him to domestic relations; which shall prevent the clergy from cohering into one body corporate; and which shall maintain, by the unopulence of the pastor, a permanent intercourse between him and those he is to instruct.'[4] It can be seen as a defence of the Church of England but not as a lively piece of prose.

In the same July issue Taylor translated 'Sacred Music an Ode from the German of Klopstock', a devotional piece of verse:

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1. Monthly Magazine, III (1797), p.337.
2. Ibid, p.338.
3. Monthly Magazine, II (1796), p.463.
4. Ibid.

Long float around my forehead blissful dream,
I hear a Christian people hymn their God,
And thousands kneel at once,
Jehovah Lord to thee.[1]

So before the Monthly Magazine had been in existence half a year Taylor seemed to have lost all sense of direction, if indeed he had ever had any and it had not been Aikin all the time who had perceived the value of Taylor's brief flare of poetic genius in 1790. There is nothing else of note for the next two years, just the exchange with Wieland and a sardonic sonnet to Stanhope which indicates that Taylor was still a Radical.

Then, in July 1798, Taylor contributed the first of three translations of poems by Goethe. These were: 'Proserpina' in July, 'The Wanderer' in August and 'The King of the Deuses' in September. There is no introduction to these or comment on them, but in a decade when Goethe was so generally ignored in England they are remarkable enough. 'Proserpina A Monodrama' is Classical in feeling, somewhere between Gessner's prose and Landor's blank verse.

Glide on, ye chosen shades, glide calmly by me,
My steps are not with yours. In your light dances
In your deep groves, your whispering dwelling place,
I hear not, as on earth, the stir of life.[2]

The second poem 'The Wanderer' suggests more of the mood of a later reflective Wordsworth, but a Wordsworth who has gone beyond the Alps into a classical Gessner land. It is a dialogue between a melancholy wanderer and a nursing mother who lives with her ploughman husband in a cottage built amidst the ruins of a classical temple. It is more descriptive than philosophical:

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1. Monthly Magazine, II, (1796), p.489.
2. Monthly Magazine, VI (1798), p.47

High on the architrave the swallow builds,
Unconscious of the beauties he beclays;
The golden bud with webs the grub surrounds,
To form a winter dwelling for her offspring;
And thou, O Man, between antiquity's
Sublimest remnants patchest up a cot -
Art happy among tombs.[1]

The translation is careful, but unless a translation is more than careful, unless the translator takes hold and writes something in the living spirit of the original, perhaps larger than it, like 'Lenora,' his work merely informs the reader. A line like, 'The golden bud with webs the grub surrounds', is obviously faithful but it does not survive, as poetry, the honest translation of 'grub'.

Nevertheless, 'The Wanderer' is a wholly neo-Classical mood poem and particularly interesting when it is remembered that Goethe's

Nature, be thou conductress of my way,
Guide the unusual path that I have chosen
Among the hallow'd groves of mighty dead,
And mouldred monuments of ages gone;
Then to a home direct th y wanderer's step
To some asylum, from the north wind safe'.[2]

was appearing in print in the summer of Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey.' Goethe's poem in Taylor's dress is, however, dated in feeling with its crude sentimentality and its transferred epithet:

'Where, when his evening steps the hut revisit
A wife like this may clasp him in her arms,
The nursling smiling at her happy breast'[3]

Neither domesticity nor Nature worship were themes for which Taylor had much feeling.

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1. Monthly Magazine, VI (1798), p.121.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

The third of the Goethe poems is easily the most impressive, and it is easy to see why. 'The King of the Deuses' has most of the elements of 'Lenora'. A father rides in icy weather with his child at his saddle bow. The child can see the evil Deuse or fire spirit which is preparing to kill it, but the father can see only 'the old willows so gray' and 'the wind that blows the dead leaves o'er the lea.' With this plot Taylor has to suggest furious pace, malicious supernatural elements, quick glimpses of natural scenery, ironic dialogue and a final macabre ending. The real strength of the poem in Taylor's version is its dramatic irony, with the contrast of the terrified child's voice, the bewildered father's false explanations and the insidious gentle menace of the King of the Deuses, heard by one human but not by the other.

> ''My darling,why hidest so fearful thine eyes?'
> 'The King of the Deuses is there;
> I know by his crownet, his tail and his size',
> 'Child,'tis but a mist in the air'.
>
> 'My pretty,come with me, my garden is gay
> All winter in spite of the cold:
> Nice games my blithe sister shall teach thee to play,
> And dress thee in coatings of gold'.'[1]

Again it is easy to play the game of influences and notice that several of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads employ just the same union of dialogue, irony and naivety. Unfortunately, unless this ballad had been in private circulation some time before its publication it could not have influenced 'We are Seven;' but it is interesting that both poems depend upon an innocent child's perception of things unseen by adults.

It seems likely, considering the two years of poetic silence before these Goethe translations, that Taylor wrote them in 1797-98. They are only preceded by an explanatory note on the Edda references to fire spirits,

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1. Monthly Magazine, VI (1798), p.197.

Hrimthurs. The same volume of the Monthly Magazine has a very learned article by Taylor on 'The Runic Sagas'. Included with this is a translation of one of the Sagas which is very reminiscent of Sayers's 'Hearse Songs' of 1790:

'Odin. First if thou can tell, declare
Whence the earth and whence the sky?
Vasthruni Ymer's flesh produced the earth;
Ymer's bone, its rocky ribs;
Ymer's skull, the skiey vault;
Ymer's teeth, the mountain ice;
Ymer's sweat, the ocean salt '[1]

But it is far from certain that any of these were recent works because Gleim's 'War Song' appeared a few months later, along with an account of Gleim's lighter poems, and this 'War Song' translation had first been published in The Cabinet, a Norwich periodical which ceased publication in 1795.

The 1799 issues of the Monthly Magazine contained two translations of German poetry into English poetry by Taylor. The first in February was 'The Devil in Ban: an Idyll' from Johann Heinrich Voss[2] and the second was 'Theseus. a Monodrama' by F.L. Stolberg.[3] Southey wrote politely to Taylor about 'your diabolic idyll'[4], but neither poem received any other notice. Both are demonstrations of Taylor's versatility and sensitivity. The Voss poem is as much a monodrama as the Stolberg, but the 'Theseus' is written in a cool refined blank verse.

.....tepid gales
Swell'd the white sail, the streaky streamer quivered
O'er the smooth sea, our ship long furrows tracing,
Rang with the measur'd noise of song and cymbals
That taught and cheer'd the rower's measur'd pull.
At night we saw the flame - capt hill of Naxos
To us unfriendly. On the fiery mountain,
Dark storms awaited, lour'd and burst upon us.[5]

1. Monthly Magazine, VI (1798), p.453.
2. Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), pp.139-140,
3. Ibid, pp.396-399.
4. Robberds Memoir, i, p.233.
5. Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), p.397.

There are signs in this that the translator, under the pressure of retaining all the items of the original, has failed to achieve an individual register; but it is elegantly neo-Classical.

'The Devil in Ban' is closer to the vigorous conversational register of Taylor's Nathan and points to Browning as 'Theseus' does to Tennyson. The devils, Lurian and Pulix, revel earthily in a minor victory over Christian forces:

> Lurian: I'll snap your spell,
> This book I stole from my old Coptic bishop:
> 'Tis full of Pharao writing and contains
> Words that break every charm but those of saints.
> O that this ink had never reached my eyes!
> Even the right is weak. Stroke back my hair.....
> 'Ahirom! Tuki! Zakarush! Misraim!'
> (you scratch like a tom cat - pull in your claws!)
> 'Abracadabra! Kirlekamatsh! Woil!'
> Pulix: Hurrah! - Live, dance, and frolic!-Pulix is free.
> My friend, let me embrace thee! - One more hug.![1]

The delight in malice, the parade of occult learning, and the general grotesque freedom of the dramatic verse all suggest the Browning of Men and Women: 'Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister' or 'Caliban upon Setebos.' No link can be proved but here Taylor is functioning exactly as a good translator should: offering lively alternative styles to an inbred native literature. Unhappily he offered no commentary to point the novelty. Both pieces are slipped without introduction into the meagre poetry pages usual in contemporary periodicals. As so often before, William Taylor displays a sensitive talent but very little urge to communicate the conclusions of his work.

What emerges from these last two chapters is that Taylor, for all his potential, was essentially a man of one poem -'Lenora'- and that his reputation as an authority on German literature grew, almost accidentally, around that one poem.

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1. The Monthly Magazine, VII (1799), p.140.

The poem is undeniably brilliant, yet it was probably only the result of Taylor's desire to compete with the writing of a greatly loved friend, and it became famous only through the influence of other friends. Taylor was a fastidious and sometimes an inspired translator but his Nathan the Wise, a work which could have had real influence in its decade, was barely noticed because Taylor's friends were not interested in it and he himself felt no urge to press it upon the public.

He was one of the very few literary figures of this period with a thorough grounding in the German language, but he had only a limited and often very conventional appreciation of the innovating German writers of this time. It is not easy even now to say just what would have been the ideal result of German influence on English writing of the 1790s. For Taylor, a retiring provincial with little feeling for the live theatre, and living in a decade distracted by revolution and war, it was impossible. Through his knowledge of European languages he had developed a feeling for the basic virility of English, an apartness from confining linguistic convention. What he lacked was any wish to apply that virility to new forms of poetry or drama. He wanted vision.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The German Novel in English translation 1752-1798 - an attempt at an appraisal

Yet once again, ye Muses! once again
Saddle the Hyppogryf! .....

Oberon

In the period of this study English translations of German novels are very unevenly distributed. It would be impudent in one closing chapter to claim to cover the years of the 'German' Gothic novel, 1794 and onwards, when so many books and articles have already been written on this particular episode of English fiction. But, when the titles of translations before 1794 and those after 1794 are written out and roughly evaluated against each other, virtually all the books of any readability and significance seem to be pre 1794. So the question arises whether the 'German Gothic' is not in fact a critical phenomenon raised by just two people: Matthew Lewis and Jane Austen, neither of whom was in a very serious mood when they performed their conjuring.

Translations of German novels before 1794 are not only unevenly distributed in time, they are very uneven in their originality, and largely disconnected from each other in theme. Those noted in the periodicals are:

1752 The History of the Swedish Countess of G. by C.F. Gellert. Also 1755, 57, 76 (twice)

1767 Memoirs of Count P. by J. Pfeil

1772 Usong, an Eastern Tale, by Baron Haller

1773 Reason triumphant over Fancy (Don Sylvio de Rosalva), by C.M. Wieland

1773 The History of Agathon, by C.M. Wieland.

1776 Lady Sophia Sternheim, by Sophie de la Roche.

1779 The Sorrows of Werter, by J.W. von Goethe. Also 1780, 82, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 94, 98, 99.

1781 Robinson the Younger, by J.H. von Campe. Also 1788, 1789 (twice).

1786 Baron Münchausen's Narrative, by KF.H. Munchausen. Also 1787, 93, 99 (8th edit.).

1786 (1st vol, 2nd vol. 1787) Henrietta of Gerstenfeld, by A. Beuvius.

1789 Heerfort and Clara, anonymous.

1791 Popular Tales from the Germans, by J.K.A. Musaus.

1793 The German Gil Blas, by A.F.F.L. Knigge.

It is worth remarking that not only were two of these thirteen novels the work of Wieland but two others: Lady Sophia Sternheim and Henrietta of Gerstenfeld either gave the impression that they were by Wieland or that they were edited by him: an indication of his acceptability in this country.

Gellert's Swedish Countess and Pfeil's Memoirs of Count P, though separated by fifteen years in their publishing dates, do have a disreputable unity in that both are obsessed with incest and make much play of suicide. These two novels stand in striking contrast to the general body of translations from the German in the 1760s: the religious epics and the elegant pastorals of Gessner. The convoluted and actual incest of the Swedish Countess precedes, by four years, the innocent suggestions of incest in Home's Douglas, 1756, and, by many years, Horace Walpole's interest in the theme as expressed in the Castle of Otranto, 1765, and The Mysterious Mother, 1781.

Defoe had handled the subject in his characteristically matter of fact manner in Moll Flanders, 1722, and Gellert writes with much of Defoe's manner. He makes the Countess relate, with bland detachment, a chronicle

of human misadventure, which would have justified the most harrowing emotional treatment. Though the novel received very little notice in the press its significance is its obvious popularity. It came out in its original translation three times in the 1750s, a time when the general tenor of translations from the German is suggested by Hubner's Easy introduction to the study of the Holy Scriptures[1] or Memoir of the House of Brandenburg[2]. 'Wrote by the King of Prussia'. Then, even more surprisingly, it was re-translated twice in 1776, once by the 'Rev. Mr N' and once by 'A Lady'; so clearly there was, for more than twenty years, a market for this kind of terse sensationalism.

The reviews in the periodicals give no clue to its popularity. It was noticed once in the 1750s in the Monthly Review, in March 1752, but by the tone of the review it can be confidently assumed that the reviewer had read only the soothing humbug of the 'Translator's Preface'. First he gives the novel its English due, 'Germany hath produced a novel, the first work of the kind from this country', and remarks condescendingly that Germany is usually 'confined to the weightier studies of school divinity, physic, chemistry & etc'. But then he dismisses the whole astonishing catalogue of sexual misadventure with the soothing platitudes of:

> The story of the Swedish Countess has nothing in it very romantic, extravagant, or unnatural; yet her adventures are sufficiently striking and well adapted to engage the reader's attention. It abounds with affecting scenes and interesting situations; with good sentiments and exemplary lessons of true morality.[3]

The Preface had claimed for the book, 'fresh touches for painting the practice of social duties, and a philosophical resignation to our destiny pourtrayed in the most vivid and indelible colours.'

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1. Critical Review, Vol.1 (1756), p.240-45.
2. Scots Magazine, XV (1753).
3. Monthly Review, VI (1752), p.231.

The real character of the book, which only escapes the category of pornography by the speed of its narrative, can only be conveyed in a précis.

An innocent girl of sixteen is married to the Swedish Count G. Soon after arriving in Sweden she meets his ex-mistress, Carolina, by whom he has had two children. She accords well with Carolina but, to spare her sensibilities, which seem notably undisturbed, Carolina and children are sent away across the Baltic. The Countess rebuffs the advances of a powerful Prince and, as a result,her husband, Count G, is sent to f ight the Russians and is killed. Quite swiftly she marries Sir R., the dead Count's best friend, and lives happily with him in Holland for many years. They meet Carolina again and her young son Carlson. Carlson marries a beautiful girl called Mariane who has fled from a convent. Later Carolina discovers that Mariane is her lost daughter so the brother and sister have married. Carlson leaves in despair to join the army and shortly dies. His friend, a brother officer, Dormund appears and he marries Mariane. Guilt shortly compels him to confess that he had murdered Carlson. Mariane commits suicide. As the Countess and Sir R.are recovering from this, the first husband, Count G., arrives in Amsterdam. He had not been killed but merely kept prisoner by the Russians. Sir R. gracefully hands his wife back to her first husband, offers to leave, but is persuaded to remain while the Count relates his adventures. The Count then dies of illness and Sir R. and the Countess are happily reunited, the Countess having again refused the Prince.

The tone of the book can be judged by the description of Carlson and Mariane after the awful discovery:

> it was a most melancholic sight to observe the behaviour of these two persons: for religion commanded them to change their conjugal love into that which reigns between brother and sister, though their hearts persuaded them they were intitled to pursue the former; because they loved each other in the most passionate manner: add to this,

> that they lived still in the spring of wedlock and were now obliged at once to break their close alliance; they had never seen or known each other before Carlson made love to Mariane.[1]

At the end of the book the Countess defends herself firmly: 'If all this will not excuse me to the false delicacy of some, let them lay their hands to their breasts; and when they have thoroughly examined what passes there, let them freely cast the first stone; but even then, let them beware of the rebound'.[2] The book ends with an advertisement for 'The Principles of the Christian Religion explained'. The whole compound makes an interesting study of the association between translations from the German, prurience and cant.

The Memoirs of Count P. makes an interesting male twin to this chronicle of perversity. With some abridgement its plot runs as follows.

Young Count P. debauches a lovely girl called Julia. She becomes pregnant but refuses his offer of marriage. The chief characters in the book swing wildly between depravity and ostentatious virtue. The Count loses his estate by the trickery of his friends and falls in with a melancholy Englishman who persuades him to a suicide pact. The Englishman shoots himself but the Count is saved at the last second by Mr. Worden, another Englishman. Mr. Worden's wife has been raped, almost before his eyes, by an Italian Marquis who suspected Worden of an affair with his Marchioness. Mrs. Worden has disappeared to hide her shame.

The Count recovers his estates and royal favour, then falls in love with a mysterious widow. When he leaves her for a time he falls in love with his cousin. The widow proves to be Mrs. Worden; so she is reunited with Mr Worden and the Count proceeds to marry the cousin. But then

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1. C.F. Gellert, M.A., The History of the Swedish Countess of G, (London, 1752), p.65.
2. Ibid, p.235.

Julia reappears and, for a time, disturbs the Count's happiness, but she conveniently falls in love with a young captain whom the Count has taken prisoner in a war. Just before she marries the captain it transpires that the captain is her son by her affair with the Count. Enraged by the news the captain tries to kill his father but his mother, Julia, throws herself between them and dies on the captain, her son's, sword.

The Count retires from the court and meditates:

> Far removed from the sting of envy, and the more dangerous praises of flatterers, I at length found here the content I had vainly sought in the various circumstances of my life ..... Here I see that religion and friendship are the only springs out of which men can alone draw the real happiness of their lives.....Oh youth! listen to the voice of thy friend;
>
> Be virtuous, if thou desirest to be happy in old age.[1]

One interesting feature of the book is the revelation that the Germans had associated the English with melancholy and love of death before the English, through Werter, came to associate the Germans with the same characteristics. The melancholy Englishman delivers a three page eulogy on the attractions of self murder and hails the Count, 'I now acknowledge you as a philosopher and a hero', when he has convinced him. The Count's resolution wavers so he 'got hold of Addison's Cato, read it, and thought like Cato.'[2]

The last moments before the Englishman dies are described almost lyrically:

> He loaded the pistols as resignedly, as if he had filled a glass with wine; after which he said, on his knees, 'Lord! virtue wishes itself free from the slavery of vice, to be happy with thee. Have mercy on our souls in our last minutes.' Then having tenderly taken

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1. F.W. Streit, Ducal S. at Jena (an impressive pseudonym for J.Pfeil) Memoirs of the Count of P-, 2 vols, (London, 1767), ii, 317.
2. Ibid, i, 260.

> leave of me he said, 'We shall soon see each other again'. He gave me the pistol, throwing his arm around my trembling arm, and, putting the muzzle of the other pistol to his head.[1]

What must be said about these two books is that they are not mere reflections of Richardson passed back to the English like some of the later translations. They are unmistakeably foreign in their unashamed sexual codes and in the concealed menace of ruthless absolutism behind the gracious facades of the Prince in the first book and the King in the second. These aristocratic lives are spent under arbitrary tyranny, but the novelists are quite undisturbed by this. The tone of the two books is harsh and alien, which was, apparently, part of their interest to English readers. Both books must have done something to establish Germany in the English mind as a place of exotic morality. The movement which appeared to stem from the notoriety of Werter, 1779, and climaxed in Stella, 1798, must have begun as early as 1752 with The Swedish Countess. These are not pleasant books and they have few literary subtleties of characterisation, but neither of them is a bore to read. The German reputation in 1760 was for phlegmatic solidity; by 1805 the Critical Review could write:

> Novels have commonly been divided into the pathetic, the sentimental and the humorous, but the writers of the German school have introduced a new class, which may be called the electric. Every chapter contains a shock.[2]

It is worth speculating what was the actual substance of this electricity. These two early translations, of 1752 and 1767 have in common with all the later 'German Gothic' novels (except Herman of Unna) the quality

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1. Memoirs of Count P, i, 261.
2. The Critical Review, V (1805), p.252. This is taken from a review of Zschokke's The Bravo of Venice.

of rapid and horrifying incident. Because the authors are grossly insensitive to the human implications of the incidents which they invent, they can rivet the attention of readers who have tired of the expanded essays in sensibility which characterise the novels of Richardson's imitators. Modern pulp magazines have the same shallow freedom. This hectic pace of surprising action may, then, be some part of the German 'electric'; but another element of many translations from the German is a more overt sexuality than English readers would find in contemporary English authors. It seems likely that over these years English readers came to associate German writings with freedom of sensual expression, and this may lie behind much of the German enthusiasm and the 'exquisite delineation of passion' which becomes such a cliché of the periodical's reviews.

The role of the periodicals as a guide to what English readers were wanting is, however, suspect. The fact that only one review comments upon three reprintings of the Swedish Countess, and that this review only got through because the reviewer cannot have read the book, is significant. There seems to have been a taste in Britain for a more sexually explicit literature than editors and printers were publicly willing to admit and translations from the German often satisfied this. If the whole range of these translations is considered it is not merely the half pornography like Memoirs of Count P which have this sensual element. Most of Gessner's Idyls are brimming with barely suppressed sexuality; Winckelmann's Reflections are homeoerotic; Fuseli's writings of 1767 are as scatological as his paintings. The acceptable Wieland's Agathon consorts freely with prostitutes. The plays of Goethe and Kotzebue both failed and succeeded by their readiness to tackle sexual situations which native writers, by instinct rather than by written code, had avoided. This escapist role for foreign literature was not new. France had long filled it; now Germany, by the raw directness of its writers as much as by any other quality, was elbowing France aside.

Memoirs of Count P demonstrates what a price in religious cant had to be paid for this sexual explicitness. Fanny, an old 'love' of the Count becomes 'a common prostitute' and lies dying 'abandoned by all, tormented by the heaviest pains of sickness, hated and cursed by herself, she had leisure to repent on half rotten straw her enormous crimes'. The Count notes that Death 'soon put a period to her wretched being':

> which she ought to have rejoiced at, provided it was not the beginning of a more wretched one. I sacrificed to the memory of this unhappy woman and my own folly some tears, and Mr. F was not ashamed to mix them with his. 'Let us', said he, 'adore the justice of providence, and implore that it may have chastised this wretched woman before her death, in order to make her eternally happy.'[1]

Baron Haller's Usong 'an Eastern Narrative' (London, 1772) was the next German novel to be translated into English. In contrast to its percursors it is very dull and very moral. Usong himself is an earlier and wholly virtuous Vatheck who is made Persian Padishaw (Emperor) by his merit and defeats the Turks. The eastern descriptions are only mildly picturesque and the book must be considered a tribute to Alb recht von Haller's reputation as a medical writer.

The next two novels, both by Wieland and both appearing in 1773, are again a contrast to what comes before, but this time the contrast is refreshing. The books: Reason triumphant over Fancy, exemplified in the Singular Adventures of Don Silvio de Rosalva, 'a history in which every marvellous Event occurs naturally' and The History of Agathon are witnesses to Wieland's ability to master most literary forms and manipulate sharply contrasted heroes while always remaining his polished and wholly artificial self. Agathon has been considered in the fourth chapter of this study, Don Sylvio is Wieland's Don Quixote, unashamedly eclectic

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1. Memoirs of Count P. , ii, 255.

and instantly recognisable as pastiche. Though the one book is set in the Periclean age of Greece and Don Sylvio rides about a roughly contemporary Spain both books are permeated with the presence of the author's mind. Sterne-type quips, nudges and whimsical asides constantly remind the reader of a comfortable, shallow world-view where nothing is absolutely serious and every deeper feeling can be explained:

> That gentle Tremor which seizes us on entering a labyrinth formed in an obscure forest, has doubtless given place to the universal belief, in past times, that woods and forests were inhabited by Gods.....the elevation of our Nature which we experience on a fine night, on beholding the heavenly canopy of Stars, evidently countenanced the opinion that this brilliant abyss of numberless inextinguishable lamps was the abode of immortal Beings.[1]

Wieland is the refined voice of enlightenment and, though Don Sylvio inhabits an old ruinous castle near 'Valentia' nothing could be less Gothic than the spirit of the book. All the adventures urge the concrete facts of reality and the laughable lightness of the imagination:

> twenty times a day would he run over every hole and corner of the Castle from top to bottom, to see if he could discover any enchanted Armour, or Trapdoor, by which he might descend into some enchanted Palace. He found, indeed, nothing that he sought for; and the bits of glass shewed him no more than knights armed, who with rested lances had from age to age been tilting at each other.[2]

Though the next novel in translation, The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim, was published in 1776 as the work of 'Sophi e, the wife of Mr de la Roche counsellor to the Elector of Treves', with only a letter of recommendation from Wieland, it was serialised in the Universal Magazine[3] from November to December of that year as being 'From the German of Mr Weiland' (sic). This suggests that Wieland's name was considered a

1. C.M. Wieland, Reason triumphant over Fancy (London, 1773), p.12.
2. Ibid, p.22.
3. The Universal Magazine, LIX (1776), p.234, 295 and 372.

potent attraction. The translator was Joseph Collyer, surviving into a more frivolous decade than that of the 1760s, where his speciality had been the religious epic.

The serialisation opens with the comment: 'the Author in his Writings seems to have made Mr Richardson his Model', and this no one would contradict. The limitation of the book's interest is that it was an adequate German version of an established English genre: a compliment to the English but not innovatory. It is a German Pamela, not a Clarissa. Sophia is a virtuous German lady who is carried away by the heartless peer, Lord Loveill, to his castle in Scotland. By her firm virtue only her reputation is ever in danger, but even that possible loss deeply disturbs Sophia.

> I would be buried here, under that tree at the foot of which I have so often, during the last Spring, thrown myself on my knees to beg of God to give me patience. Here, where my mind has been tormented, my body ought to be dissolved ... in the mean while my friend, save my memory from the assaults of calumny, from the shame which follows the appearance of vice: say that, though unhappy, I have faithfully preserved my virtue.[1]

Though the wicked Lord's home is in Scotland there are no architectural trappings of the Gothic and the final scene after she has married the good Lord Seymour in Tweedale is pastoral and even Gessnerian.

The next translation, The Sorrows of Werter, though epistolary in form like Lady Sophia, is a masterpiece of originality and insight, the mere record of its reprinting testifies to the fascinated reaction of the British. It has been considered at some length in Chapter Eight of this study. The British were familiar with the theme of the suicide of lovers. Edward Jerningham's long narrative poems of the 1760s:

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1. Sophie de la Roche, The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim, 2 vols. (London, 1776), ii, 149.

1763 The Mag dalens

1763 The Nunnery

1764 The Nun

1765 Elegy written among the ruins of an Abbey

1770 The Funeral of Arabert

are a direct link with the Gothic plays and novels of Baculard D'Arnau d written in France at that time. Jerningham wrote in 1773, Faldoni and Teresa, 'founded, on a very singular event that happened near Lyons in the month of June 1770'. In this the two young lovers make a suicide pact and, though the girl is reluctant, carry it through actually at the foot of an altar, dressed as for a marriage. Even Werter's emphasis on the pistols is anticipated: 'See, near, the cross (in silken chains array'd)/The ready instruments of death display'd'. But the heroic couplets rob it of any of Werter's extraordinary sympathetic immediacy:

> They now approach to give the fatal wound,
> While trembling Expectation hovers round:
> One solemn moment they reserve to pray'r
> And now the dire explosion rends the air,
> They fall - and to the awful pow'r above
> Resign the tortur'd soul of hopeless love.[1]

This poem and the whole body of Jerningham's verse is worth notice if only to impress yet again that the French preceded the Germans in almost every theme, particularly in the Gothic, where French experiments in the genre go back to the very first years of the eighteenth century.

Studies of this period, like J.R. Foster's History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England (London, 1949) have to deal with a bewildering number of possible sources for the Gothic genre. Indeed the pursuit can reasonably be taken back to Gawain and the Green Knight and Chaucer's

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1. Edward Jerningham, Faldoni and Teresa (London, 1773), p.16.

Knight's Tale. In this study just one work needs to be cited to indicate the very early lead of the French in this type of narrative and the eager manner in which the English copied them.

The Memoirs of the Life and Adventures of Signor Rozelli at the Hague, 'done into English from the second edition of the French' was published in London in 1709. Though it has Defoe's rapid picaresque narrative line and is light hearted in tone it teems with details prophetic of The Monk. It is a translation of L'Infortune Napolitain by the Abbé Olivier.

Rozelli's father is buried alive in the tomb of his dead, but pregnant, wife and Rozelli is delivered by a Sexton. After lively adventures in a Neopolitan brothel he is taken prisoner by the Turks and half circumcised by a Dervish who is trying to turn him into a Mahometan. He escapes and becomes a Friar with a taste for religious polemical writing; preaches to the Queen of Sweden and hears a tale of a young novice who is served with dinner on a silver tray by a familiar spirit.

In Venice Rozelli learns the arts of a Jewish cabalist. The Jew's lovely daughter falls in love with him and visits him disguised as an abbot. He becomes a Jew and this time is completely circumcised. The Inquisition takes him and he uses his Cabala to warn them of the consequences of a comet. This puts him in prison again but he escapes and a long sensual intrigue with a milkmaid follows. He gets in more trouble by offering to use his Cabala to transport two Abbots to Mingrelia to set up a new religion under the Sublime Porte. He is master of all kinds of sub-religious trickery with a cabinet which he opens when he wears 'a frightful kind of cap and black clothes which I kept on purpose to divert myself withal at the expense of fools. I begun to hum out some Hebrew words and put myself into Postures enough to have frightened

Old Nick.'

So Jerningham was quite late in the Gothic interchange of themes between the French and the English. The other point which the Jerningham poem suggests is that there really was a subconscious English love of death and that its presence accounts for the strength and complexity of the British reaction to Werter, right through the 1780s and even into the 1790s. The periodicals are anything but a safe guide yet the scatter of entries in Morgan and Hohlfeld is cumulatively impressive:-

1784 Gentleman's Magazine, 'Theophilus who had read of the sudden death of Miss Glover under whose pillow a copy of Werter was found. Werter condemned.'

1784 The Lady's Magazine, 'To the memory of Werter, Charlotte, "Oft do I wander".'

1784 Scots Magazine, 'Werter to Charlotte, a poem'.

1784 Universal Magazine, 'Ode on the sorrows of Werter'

1785 Critical Review,'Eleanora: from the sorrows of Werter, a tale'

1785 European Magazine, 'Severe condemnation of Werter'

1785 Ibid, 'The sorrows of Charlotte at the tomb of Werter'

1785 Ibid, 'A new tragedy called Werter, quote: Prologue and Epilogue'

1785 Gentleman's Magazine, 'A description of the tomb of Werter'.

1785 The Lady's Magazine, 'On reading the sorrows of Werter, an Elegy.'

After all these the only review of any length to greet Werter in 1779, the year of its publication, is ironical: the London Review noted that the book had 'raised some little clamour' in Germany, but concluded with superb self-confidence:

> On the same account, it would, probably, give some offence in England if we had not been so long accustomed to hear the most sacred opinions

> as well as the most venerable characters treated with the utmost freedom and familiarity.[1]

That there should have been no other translation of a German novel apart from the trivial Robinson the Younger[2], 1781, until Baron Münchausen[3] and the first volume of Henrietta of Gerstenfeld in 1786, is unexpected. The success of Werter should logically have produced a number of other German works to ride on Werter's success; it is unlikely that the publishers had been appalled into inactivity by public outrage, and their underactivity is a mystery.

It is at this point, 1786, when the British were becoming aware that the literary ground was trembling in Germany under the tread of Goethe and Schiller, that every translation, however slight, and most of them are very slight, needs to be examined carefully. One or more of them may give a clue to the feeling of undirected and indeterminate enthusiasm for German literature which seems, through a fog of critical attention, to have become prevalent in the 1790s.

Henrietta of Gerstenfeld is not, at first reading, a remarkable book; but, when only its first volume had been published and its improbable conclusion was still a speculation in the readers brain, the Critical Review brooded thoughtfully on its attraction: 'Is it in consequence of our common ancestry that we feel a congenial warmth for everything of German origin? Or do we only approve of their writing because of the strong, sound good sense, which is observable on every page?'[4]

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1. London Review, X (1779), p.36.
2. This is a short light hearted version of Robinson Crusoe.
3. This was immediately popular and remained a minor classic for at least a century.
4. Critical Review, LXIII (1787), p.389.

The 'congenial warmth' of the book can still be appreciated. It is pitched at a very homely level. Major Wolkmar, battered by the wars but wholly honourable, cheerful and modest, is a successful creation, and so is the old Minister, with his partiality for Tom Jones as well as for Clarissa, and his supreme admiration for the Vicar of Wakefield. These are rounded characters which seem designed to relate to an English audience. But beyond them the book offers very little. The Major has lost his wife and child in the wars. Henrietta has been fostered by the Minister and educated by a lady of the village. After the statutory Richardsonian period of sexual peril, she is united to young Charles Werner and it emerges that the Lady of the village, all unbeknown to either party, is her real mother and Major Wolkmar is her real father. The book is firmly attributed to Mr. Wieland though in fact it was written by Adam Beuvius; so the popularity of Wieland, both through his real and through his 'ghost' works, has been growing through the last two decades. This may have been a contributary factor to the general popularity of German literature in the next decade. Acceptability rather than originality may be the key word in this preliminary period; certainly it is hard to think of any French novel translated at this time which has quite the cos y 'slippers-by-the-fire' atmosphere of Henrietta. So to that extent the Critical's musings are justified and the interest in German books may be an aspect of the increasing cultural confidence of the petit bourgeois.

The only German novels or short stories between 1787 and the first genuinely German Gothic novel, Herman of Unna, 1794, are an unimpressive trio which seem most unlikely to have whetted a British appetite for German fiction. The three are Heerfort and Clara 1789, an anonymous romance with no Gothic undertones, William Beckford's translation of J.K.A. Musaeus's Popular Tales from the Germans, 1791, which are earlier versions of

Grimm's Fairy Tales, shot with sadistic malice, and A.F. Knigge's picaresque novel The German Gil Blas, 1793. The title of this last suggests that the mere word 'German' is becoming a selling point, but the book, though generously reviewed, is not original or striking.

Of these three, Beckford's short stories seem most likely to have impressed the reading public. Beckford's Preface is anthropologically acute about the importance of myth and legend to the soul of a nation, and perceptive about the failure of Ossian and 'the unpleasing effect of the necromancer, Macpherson's disenchanting wand'.[2] But the Critical Reviews dismissal with:

> 'Lord Papa! is not that story you read to us last night about the Nymph of the Fountain very like the story of Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper, in the little book you gave me last summer?' Cinderella! bring the book my dear. Ah! ah! my good friend, have you been poaching in such grounds? or have you only drank from the same 'fountain'? [1]

is a fair one and probably represents the level at which Musaeus was received.

On the side of German fiction the field up to 1794 is quite empty of anything which would associate Germany with the Gothic genre in the mind of the British reading public. Gothic novels had been written in Germany in the last ten years but they had neither been translated nor mentioned in England.

At this point the accepted chronology of the English Gothic novel must be emphasised. Building upon a literary tradition, which it had shared with the French for at least thirty, and arguably ninety, years the English Gothic novel had reached its peak before a single German Gothic novel had been translated. A list of comparative dates is helpful:-

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1. The Critical Review, III (1791), p.56.

1789 Mrs. Radcliffe's Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne

1789 Charlotte Smith's Ethelinda

1790 Radcliffe's Sicilian Romance

1791 Radcliffe's Romance of the Forest

1793 Eliza Parson's Castle of Wolfenbach

1793 Charlotte Smith's The Old Manor House

1794 Radcliffe's Udolpho	1794 Naubert's Herman of Unna
1794 Cullen's The Haunted Priory	1794 Kahlert's The Necromancer
1795 Lewis's The Monk	1795 Schiller's The Ghost Seer
1796 Parson's The Mysterious Warning	1796 Grosse's Horrid Mysteries

From this it is clear that German translations could have had no influence on the best known pieces of English Gothic fiction. This list takes no account of what had gone before in England. After Leland's William Longsword Earl of Salisbury had shut Richardsons standard characters into a castellated dungeon,came Walpole's seminal, rather than realised, work,The Castle of Otranto. The next twenty five years of fiction have been combed over in at least ten major studies to trace every detail of the uncertain development of the genre, and they are not strictly relevant to this study but William Hutchinson's The Hermitage combines the full trappings of Catholicism, splendid descriptions of feudal castles, hermits, wicked monks, celestial visions and neo Platonic spirits, with the usual theme of the disinherited hero whose noble ancestry is revealed; and this was written in 1772, twenty years before the period in dispute.

The comparative date chart is not quite just to the Germans because Veit Weber's The Sorcerer was also published in 1795, and the German list for 1796 could be extended by Weber's The Black Valley and Grosse's The Dagger. Also K.G. Cramer's Albert de Nordenshild or the Modern Alcibiades appeared in translation in 1794, but this is not a Gothic novel.

It is significant that Eliza Parson's Castle of Wolfenbach with its Middle European setting, German names but wholly English plot was subtitled 'A German Tale', and this was published in 1793 before any authentic German Gothic novels had been translated. This suggests very strongly that the British reader wished to believe in horrific German fiction before there was any certain awareness that any had been written, and that Benedikte Naubert, Weber, Grosse and the others came in to satisfy an existing appetite rather than to carve out a market for themselves.

The Analytical Review's account of the non-Gothic Albert de Nordenshild picks up the same note of approval for warmth and sincerity that could be detected in the Critical Review's review, 1787, of Henrietta of Gerstenfeld. The Analytical Review claims that,

> An interesting warmth of imagination and truth of passion appear in this translation, which seems to characterise German works of fancy, at the very period when romantic rants of false refinement in the majority of the modern novels of France and England only excite a restless curiosity which fatigues the head without touching the heart.[1]

This is a very exact indication that a national concept existed, at least by 1796, the date of this review, of an elusive German quality of sincere and spontaneous feeling. It is worth remembering that Nathan Drake's first short story in The Speculator, 1790, of Wolkmar and the dog, may have picked up the name Wolkmar from Henrietta of Gerstenfeld, the earlier novel praised for its warmth of feeling. Drake then indulged in an intensely sentimental episode set high up in Alpine snows, where an old man dies happily as a broken family is re-united. Exactly what the source of this German association was it is not easy to say, but it was noted in Chapter Five that it was becoming usual in magazines

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1. Analytical Review, XXIV (1796), p.404.

in the 1780s to describe small sentimental stories as 'German'. Mrs Parson's application of this term to her Castle of Wolfenbach marks another shift, as that book has at least as many contrived spectres as it has senti mental episodes.

Whatever the source of this expectation pattern may have been (and Werter seems the likeliest source) it tended to present the German Gothic novels in a more favourable light than they deserved.

It is true that with her Herman of Unna Benedikte Naubert had introduced the new sub-genre of the Secret Tribunal to the main Gothic theme. Hailing the book the British Critic lamented how rare it was to find in a novel 'the rays of fancy and of genius ... the sober steady light which illuminates and adorns the moral system, which inspires the mind by examples of persevering fortitude, uncorrupted virtue and noble traits of sensibility and honour'[2], but found them all in Herman.

The book is, by modern standards, only just readable; it has few realised visual episodes, moral discourse is sown liberally and the characters, though warm, are unsubtle. It does have, however, the one vital element for which three volumes of tedium have to be forgiven: the frightening but poetic picture of a lone woman facing in the darkness her hooded accusers:

> Scarcely had he done speaking, when a voice more appalling than the sound of the bell, cried out in a tone of authority:
> 'Ida Munster! sorceress! accused of murder, of high treason, appear! We, the secret avengers of the Invisible, cite thee before the justice of God! - appear! appear!'[2]

These occasional glimpses, realisation in print of the mind's half

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1. British Critic, II (1794), pp.278-83.
2. Benedikte Naubert, Herman of Unna, 3 vols.(London, 1794), i, 254.

conscious terrors, are what make the Gothic Novel such a feeding ground for poets and for critics. Wild writing is bound occasionally to express wild truths of the psyche.

At a more conscious level these novels of secret societies, dark oaths and complex scheming were very fortunate in that they were published just as the Abbé Barruel and Robi son were frightening the whole country with their elaborate accounts of the revolutionary activities of the German Illuminati. The Translator's Preface to Horrid Mysteries plays at length on existing British awareness of the Illuminati, chronicling their history and solemnly impressing their living threat to society:

> This is the confession of a man that was, many years, a warm advocate of Freemasonry, and a superior of the Illuminators. The author of the subsequent pages has had too many opportunities of making a similar experience with Baron de Knigge, and also was a member of the Order of the Illuminators, which he left before its dissolution. He has been driven out of his native country by the secret persecutors of his former brethren, whose intrigues he exposed.[1]

In addition to its advantage of catching the panic tide of Illuminati fever, Horrid Mysteries is a notable example of the greater freedom of German writers in sexual matters. Michael Sadleir politely describes the book as 'quite distinct in nature and origin from its fellows'[2]. He marks it out as one of the German originals by which Matthew Lewis was influenced in his writing of The Monk, 'the love scenes are luscious and detailed beyond even the aspiration of Monk Lewis, and I am aware of no Gothistic novel issued in English during the period which can rival it for frank carnality.'[3]

The book treats sexual incidents very casually and even uses them

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1. The Marquis of Grosse, Horrid Mysteries (London, 1968), p.XVIII.
2. Michael Sadleir, Things past (London, 1944), p.180.
3. Ibid, p.192

for humorous effect:

> I saw the coachman standing on the threshold, gazing into the room, and holding his sides with laughing ... the Count sat by the bed, caressing and, at last, tenderly embracing, a lady that was almost entirely naked. The latter glowed, with a high crimson hue, but the fire that burned in her face was not the effect of anger. Her longing eyes surveyed the beautiful form of the Count; she suffered his kisses and appeared to be displeased with nothing but the number of witnesses. Seeing me, at length, at the head of the servants, she ejaculated a loud scream, and disengaging herself from the Count's embraces, hid herself in the bed.[1]

Passages such as this, while not common in Gothic novels, were sufficient to give the genre a bad name. It seems likely then that the German Gothic novels were eagerly received because books like Werter, Henrietta of Gerstenfeld, Heerfort and Clara, and probably a host of short episodes in periodicals had given German authors an image of being warm sympathetic writers. Naubert's book, the first to be published, added an original slant to the established Gothic theme and this element of the Secret Societies was introduced at just the right time for successor novels to benefit by the nervous political atmosphere in a war beleaguered island.

Horrid Mysteries probably stands in the same relationship to German Gothic translations as Goethe's Stella stands to the success of German plays on the British stage. It was the rogue volume which was too much for the guardians of morality to bear. Warmth and tenderness were welcome visitors across the German Ocean, but frank sexuality was another matter. The frank emotional writing which originally recommended German translations to this country was, in the last years of the century, the feature which xenophobic critics used to rouse the ever ready British sense of moral outrage and cut back the German tide to a modest stream.

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1. Horrid Mysteries, p.222.

One other reason behind the open British reception of these derivative German books could well have been the enormous success of Zimmermanns Solitude in 1791 and the more modest, but still substantial, interest shown in Tytler's translation of Schiller's The Robbers, which came out in 1792. These two books, more than any others,must have established Germany in the British mind as a source of remarkable literature just as the decade was opening. Both are suggestive of the Gothic mood though in totally different ways. Solitude, for all its title,is a cheerful positive work, likely to comfort all those who have failed in human contact by its emphasis upon the ennobling effect of isolation. With a fund of anecdote and precept, drawn from the ancient and the modern world,Zimmermann proves that 'Solitude affords us an opportunity to diminish the number of our passions', that 'the purest happiness, the most enchanting tranquility, are also within the reach of men whose temperament is cold', and that freed from the world 'we no longer wrestle with misfortunes, because we know how to soften them, we no longer murmur against the dispensations of Providence, but reflect with calmness and serenity on the advantages we have derived from Solitude'[1]. This sage, with his optimistic pessimism, was a great connoisseur of wild Gothic scenery:

> A religious horror and soft raptures are alternately excited by the deep gloom of forests, by the tremendous height of broken rocks, and by the multiplicity of sublime and majestic objects which present themselves to our view on the delightful sight of a smiling landscape.[2]

The book was perfectly calculated to catch the spirit of the time and convey it as readably as possible to the largest number of introverts. It was the outstanding 'German' success in England of the whole decade,

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1. M. Zimmermann, Solitude, translated from the French of J.B. Mercier (London, 1791), pp.182, 220, 168.
2. Ibix. p.220

though it was in fact a translation from the French, Solitude pushed even Werter into second place with its record of publishing in 1791, 1792, 1795, 1797, 1798 and three editions in 1799. Any examination of the sources of German popularity in the 1790 must give heavy weight to Zimmermann's ingenious combination of optimism and depression. The actual influence of Solitude on the reception of the German Gothic novels can only be estimated, but it seems likely that the kind of reader who would be cheered by Zimmermann might well be pleased by spectres and sinister shapes in the halls of haunted castles. There are times when the Zeitgeist is better defined than at others. The 1790s were such a defined time, as were the 1960s.

It would be wrong to lay too much importance on the German Gothic novels of the 1790s. They were only a handful among the large number of native productions from the Minerva press and other publishers. Only two of the infamous 'Northanger' novels were direct translations from the German. As recently as 1891 Professor Sainsbury thought that all seven of them were titles made up by Jane Austen in a fit of whimsy. Devendra P. Varma in his introduction to the Folio Edition of the novels ingeniously explains the great rarity of the novels by the fact that they were read so eagerly and so often that most of the volumes wore away to shreds.[1] It is at least as likely that most of them were only printed once, were little valued and were quickly thrown away. The most interesting thing about them is that they, and the other Gothic novels, have received so much critical attention even before it became modish to be broad minded about the scope of 'text'.

Matthew Lewis's sensational novel The Monk does not lie within the exact scope of this study but so much emphasis is laid upon its German

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1. Parsons, The Castle of Wolfenbach, (London, 1968), p.XIII Edited by Varma.

sources that these need some consideration. It is not possible, for a start, that The Monk was influenced by any translations from the German. The only novel which might have influenced Lewis by the bold carnality of its treatment was Grosse's Horrid Mysteries. The Monk was published late in 1795[1] and Horrid Mysteries was published some time in July 1796.[2] Lewis may, of course, have read Grosse's book in German. He certainly learned German during his six months stay in Germany in 1792. But Lewis also, like most educated Englishmen, spoke fluent French. He was in Paris during his summer vacation of 1791 and either saw at the theatre or read Benoit Joseph Marsollier's Camille ou Le Souterrain and Jacques Marie Boutet de Monvel's Les Victimes Cloîtrées. He mentioned both these plays in letters to his mother of 1792. Louis Peck points out that the whole substance of Agnes's story in The Monk, 'her unwilling entrance into religious life, the letters and visits of her lover who, disguised as a gardener, gains access to the convent, the rescue attempts, her incarceration, her rescue',[3] are all drawn from Les Victimes Cloîtrées, 1791.

In his 'Advertisement' to The Monk Lewis mentioned that 'the Bleeding Nun is a tradition still credited in many parts of Germany; and I have been told, that the ruins of the Castle of Lauenstein, which she is supposed to haunt, may yet be seen upon the borders of Thuringia'[4]

He made no mention of his obvious borrowings from the French plays, but this is not surprising since Britain was at war with France and German literature was still highly popular in 1795-96.

Although Lewis claimed, in keeping with the inspirational tradition of British Gothic writing, that he had composed The Monk in ten weeks,

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1. See Louis F. Peck A Life of Matthew G. Lewis (Harvard, 1961), p.23.
2. Andre Parreaux, The Publication of The Monk (Paris, 1960), p.28, n.3.
3. A Life of Matthew G. Lewis, p.23.
4. M.G. Lewis, The Monk edited by Anderson (London, 1960), p.7.

it is quite possible that the Otranto-type manuscript on which he had been working intermittently ever since his Oxford Hilary term of 1791 was finally shaped into The Monk during his stay at The Hague in 1794. Lewis himself gave credit to Mrs Radcliffe's Udolpho for the final burst of creativity which produced his novel from material which he had been collecting since 1791.

During his holiday in Paris that summer Lewis had clearly been dazzled by the number of operas and plays which were showing which he was confident would be successful if they were produced in London. The French writers had been hoarding a number of viciously anti-clerical plays during the last years of Bourbon censorship, and a crop of these emerged with the Revolution. England had earlier been given a taste of at least the themes of these in Madame de Genlis' tale of Cecilia, the beautiful nun, one of the exemplars in Adelaide and Theodore, which had been translated into English, possibly by Thomas Holcroft, in 1782. Cecilia was separated from her lover the Chevalier de Murville and incarcerated in a convent for ten years.

The great fount and origin of these tales which link love, frustrated or consummated, with the cloister was Baculard d'Arnaud, 1718-1805. His lugubrious masterpiece Les Amans Malheureux ou Le Comte de Comminge had been written and printed in 1764 but not produced on stage until the freedom of 1790, so it was, to all intents, a recent play. It has none of Lewis's vicious sexual violence but Adelaide, Comminge's lover, disguises herself as a novice and contrives to live near to Comminge, though unrecognised by him, for years in the monastery. The death scene is gloomily superb and wholly moral.

Les Victimes Cloîtrées is much closer in mood to The Monk. Peck's account of the play makes it appear that it was the source only for

the Agnes episode of Lewis's book. In fact it closely suggests the ugly central passion of The Monk as some extracts will indicate.

The good Père Louis has discovered a letter to the wicked Père Laurent, half burnt on a fire. He reports the contents to young Dorval whose beloved Eugénie has been placed, for her protection, in this nest of vice:

> La lettre était de l'abbesse de ce même couvent, dont un simple mur nous sépare. Elle m'apprend qu'il existe entre les deux monastères une communication, dont le P. Laurent seul, et ses affidés ont le secret et font un usage fréquent. Cette lettre, monument de scandale, et dépôt infernal des plus noires horreurs, anéantit mes scrupules et m'impose le devoir .....[1]

he warns Dorval of Laurent's intentions:

> Son amour effréné pour Eugénie paraît à découvert par les réponses de l'abbesse; elle sert les odieux projets de ce monstre abominable.... Tous deux font jouer, mais vainement, tous les ressorts de la scélératesse, pour séduire, pour corrompre le coeur de vôtre amante.[2]

The wicked priest and the Abbess together fake the death of Eugénie. In a striking final scene the two lovers are shown in adjoining cells, from which Dorval escapes with the help of a bar of iron and a bloody stone.

Lewis owed the conclusion of The Monk to German sources, but the two main 'love' themes and the essential geography of the Madrid monastry are plainly filched from de Monvel. No one reading the original editions of the Drames and novels of d'Arnaud or Loaisel de Tréogate with their superb illustrations can fail to be impressed by the technical achievement of the French while the English were still stumbling around the Gothic forms in the middle 1760s. But, with the usual English perversity towards

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1. Boutet de Monvel, Les Victimes Cloîtrées, (Paris, 1877), p.194.
2. Ibid, p.194.

their nearest neighbour, no one has suggested calling the genre the 'French Gothic Novel'. To be fair to the English it was they who introduced the French to the cult of garden ruins and mock 'ancient' architecture from which the literary form essentially stems; and the French were obliged to give up their adjective 'Romanesque' and adopt the English 'Romantic', though Rousseau could never make up his mind which to use.[1]

It may seem that the importance of German Gothic novels is being assaulted with unreasonable violence but even the claim that the German writing was more 'electric', more intense than the English is untenable. Robert Mayo pointed in an article in The Modern Language Review[2] to the distinction between the Gothic Tale and the Gothic Fragment. The Gothic Fragment is a common form in the periodicals of the 1790s Nathan Drake was fond of writing them and his earliest, Sir Gawen, appeared in The Speculator[3], 1790. Essentially a Fragment is a dream vision or hectic reverie which makes no attempt at a plausible narrative and is therefore free to achieve effects of wildness beyond the reach of the most fantastic novel. Mayo summarises a Fragment from the Carlton House Magazine of 1793.

The Maiden Ismena walks by night in 'the thick forest which reared its awful shade beyond the stately castle of the Count her father'. She falls into a reverie, hears lute notes and sees thick cloud obscure the moon. Lightning flashes, 'howling of wild beasts resounds on every side'. She falls unconscious and wakes to the fierce clashing of swords as two knights fight near her. She flees to a nearby ruined abbey, on the altar of which a woman lies weltering in blood, clutching a rusty poignard.

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1. Letourneur in his 1776 translation of Shakespeare decided on 'Romantic'.
2. Modern Language Review, XXXVII (1942), p.448, Robert D. Mayo 'The Gothic Short Story in the Magazines.'
3. The Speculator (London, 1790), no, 10, 11, 12.

She warns Ismena of the 'fatal effects of heedlessness, vice and criminal despair', then dies. Ismena faints and wakes in an enchanted garden where a youth tempts her with a 'bowl of intoxicating mixture.' She dashes the 'fatal beverage' to the ground. There is a shriek, a crash and the whole vision fades. Ismena wakes in the wood and returns soberly to her castle.

This is very close to Drake's Speculator fragment but it is even more suggestive of the basic situation of Coleridge's Christabel and parallels the puzzling fact that Christabel should have been out alone in the midnight wood. Certainly the relaxed form of a Fragment is likelier to have suggested poetic attempts like Wordsworth's Fragment of a Gothic Tale than was the complex and relatively rational structure of a novel.

The periodicals of these years have been used heavily in this study. It was inevitable as they are virtually the only surviving popular voice of a time unblessed by diarists with a fondness for things German. A survey of their German material in 1798, that year of the German fall, is worth using as a conclusion, because it will represent exactly the essential unity and continuity of the period which has been under study. 1798 is also, by the publication of the Lyrical Ballads, the first year of the maturity of Romantic writing.

Inevitably in 1798 both Goethe's Werter, the old villain of the translations, and Zimmermann's Solitude, the new hero, were republished yet again. But so too were Gessner's Idylls. The Scots Magazine featured an 'Account of Gessner' out of loyalty to the fact that the republication was in Edinburgh, and the Monthly Mirror printed a 'Fragment in the Manner of Gessner', a clear sign that the simple Greek Ideal still attracted readers of radical inclination. The Monthly Review gave the Midnight Bell a brief notice, showing that the 'German' Gothic stream was not

quite exhausted; and the same magazine printed a translation of The Wild Huntsman's Chase by Bürger, an echo of the Bürger enthusiasms of 1796.

The Monthly Magazine printed three William Taylor translations of Goethe poems: 'Proserpina', 'The Wanderer' and 'Erlkonig'. These and the Monthly Review's translation of a lively passage of criticism from Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre suggest that Goethe's reputation was rising in one field at least and that Werter, though still in print, was being forgiven.

In 1798, after almost thirty years, Wieland achieved real influence in a translation with his Oberon, and this was widely reviewed.

In the theatre the picture is more varied, even melancholy. The Monthly reviewed The Inquisitor, claimed to be the work of 'the late Jasper P. Andrews' but actually a defiant gesture by Thomas Holcroft at the theatre goers who had laughed at the play he finally wrote, fourteen years too late to create an English Sturm und Drang. Lewis's version of Schillers Kabale und Liebe, The Minister, was noted in the Critical Review; but it was the Lady's Monthly, very appropriately, which gave its attention to Keppel Craven's version of The Robbers, cut down daintily for the Margravine Elizabeth, his mother's, private theatre and now published in a flustered attempt to prove that the permanently 'young' Lady Craven had not been at tempting to stage sedition and moral corruption in her Brandenburg House.

Kotzebue's The Stranger and Lover's Vows inevitably featured in almost every periodical. 1798 was Kotzebue's year in Britain and the staid Annual Register printed the song from The Stranger, 'I have a silent sorrow here', which was a true accolade. Schiller's noble Don Carlos, in contrast, was left among the book reviews, unacted and unconsidered for the stage.

Lastly, the Analytical Review's sweet-acid account of Goethe's Stella, which may have been by Fuseli in his disgruntled middle-age, prepared the ground for the Anti Jacobin's devastating counter stroke on the whole German movement in drama. This was, of course, The Rovers by 'Higgins', the pen name of Canning and Frere.

So the whole movement of the German translations, with its unexpected failures and its unpredictable successes, the enthusiasm that met it and the rooted antagonisms that countered it, are all balanced here in one year of periodicals. Only one major figure, the Abbé Winckelmann, is absent from the columns. His memorials would be found in the naked forms of the Greek ideal, set in the niches and pediments,on the chimney pieces and pedestals of virtually every major Classical building project in the country.

CONCLUSION

What the periodicals reveal of translations from the German in 1798 is a map of confusion: with unexpected success, undeserved failure, unwearied revival, new triumph and brewing disaster. At the risk of some repetition a brief summary of the impact of German writings in Britain in the forty years of this survey is indicated.

The real obstacle to recognition of the Swiss achievement in Britain in the 1760s and afterwards is its magnitude. Critics have always been ready to give the Gothic strain of literature in this country its due; to admit that works like Keats's 'Eve of St Agnes' or Byron's Manfred have their roots in popular horror literature of little intrinsic merit but much suggestive force. Consequently every step in this horror literature: poem, fragment or novel, has been recorded and analysed to reveal some post-Burkean expansion of self awareness. Nothing remotely approaching this attention has ever been given to the publishing history and quality of Gessner's Idyls in this country. There are a few lesser German pastoral writings in Gessner's shadow but essentially Gessner himself is the equivalent of the whole train of Gothic writings from 1762 to 1798. Gessner's Idyls in their several translations, their frequent reprintings and imitations in the magazines: these are the main line of Classical inspiration in Britain. For no clear reason no native British handling of Greece in its pastoral 'Golden Age' came near to Gessner's writing in direct simplicity of language or charm of description. Critics forgive the Gothic novel readily for its turgidity and improbability; they seem never to forgive Gessner for his limpid tedium and his homely but virile morality. The Swiss eclogue of the century's last four decades has been consistently ignored or underpraised when the background reading of the major Romantic

poets is considered. But just as 'St Agnes' and Manfred rise from the Gothic, so Wordsworth's pastoral poetry, indirectly, and Keats, Shelley, Byron and Tennyson's classical poetry, directly, rise from the neo-Classical tradition which Gessner pre-eminently represents in the 1760s. His position as the outstanding writer of this strain remained unchallenged until the end of this study period. The style adopted by his translators and the images of his idealised shepherd world held an attraction for the British of these years which has never been fairly appreciated by critical writers. Because he is dull to our reading,his freshness and originality in his times has been dismissed.

The translations of Winckelmann's writings have not been so consistently underrated but the confusion, anonymity and obscurity of their publishing has, in part, prevented them from being seen as the rival of Burke's essay in aesthetic theory. Simplicity and grandeur, the ideal rather than the actual, never seem to attract the same literary attention as terror and delight in darkness. Yet the eighteenth century in its literary and artistic forms is essentially a classical period. The Gothic is only an engaging side stream of development. Gessner and Winckelmann are, at the very least, as influential for their century as Walpole and Burke.

The matter of the involvement of Arcadia with radical thinking about an Ideal, and therefore revolutionary, new society is much harder to define. But this study has traced the faint but definite links between Gessner and radical notions in general and with Diderot in particular. The radical nature of so many of the publishers, writers and translators of the German has not been compressed into one chapter, but it must have become apparent to the reader that in almost every chapter there has been this connection between the enthusiasts for German writing and radical ideas about human sexual and emotional relations and about political affairs. Between the

crude sexual plotting of Gellert and Kotzebue's persuasive handling of domestic tensions lie major impacts upon British emotional awareness like The Sorrows of Werter, The Robbers, Nathan the Wise, Solitude, Negro Slaves and Pizarro. Even the ridiculed Stella should stand alongside these by reason of the venomous brilliance of the response which it provoked in The Rovers.

It has become clear from this study that several of these major translations from the German, such as Nathan or the Negro Slaves, passed almost unnoticed, sometimes through public distaste, sometimes by the nature of their translators. But the sheer perversity of British taste in the reception of an alien literature is revealing and valuable. The present, or even the mid nineteenth century, evaluation of German writers of this period is almost wholly irrelevant to their actual reception and fame in eighteenth century Britain. This contemporary Britain received what it was able to digest and spewed back vigorously much that now seems noble or subtle. Even rejection is a kind of education. The adventures of Catherine Morland are a reaction of an alarmed and defensive society, but they are not a final reaction. Situations of psychological stress do not disappear because a maiden lady laughs at them in Bath or a witty satirist derides them in his magazine.

Within the limits of this period of study the Classical strand of German influence was far more successful than the Gothic because the English response to it was the positive one of the Lyrical Ballads, not the negative one of The Rovers. But the kind of critical writing of Goethe, Schiller, and Kant which was just beginning to be given a cautious showing in the periodicals is the surest sign that, in the history of translations from the German, the date 1800 is only a hesitation and a pause. An emotional reserve, even a dishonesty, has been both a limiting factor on British acceptance of German

writing throughout this period and an underlying reason for the attraction of German writing. The appeal and the threat of Werter was the unmannered honesty of its human analysis. Winckelmann's enthusiasm for Apollo and Goethe's appreciation of Ophelia were both uninhibited. Gessner's shepherds, for all the simple elegance of their setting, have warm and open spirits. The Rovers was, in essence, a protest against the uncomfortable truths of human relations, a retreat behind the barriers of ridicule.

It is an interesting comment on the apparent half failure of German influence in this country in the ighteenth century that,when native writers of real stature took over the work of exploring the human condition, most of their writing was in the guarded formality of poetry rather than in the too immediate forms of the novel and the play. Nothing German in the whole forty years aroused quite so much respectable critical attention and imitation as Bürger's Lenore. Though it was the mood of the translations which was their novelty and their attraction, the formalism of a mock mediaeval ballad about a young woman's ride on the back of a ghost horse avoided any dangerous consideration of human values or real relationships. Though the 'Ancyent Marinere' is a very great poem it is a very formal and symbolic one. In these forty years German writing sometimes disturbed the British, but when Wordsworth went over to Germany in 1798-99 it is a significant comment on the relationship between the two cultures that he shut himself up with his sister and wrote the Lucy poems: a tender formalisation of his own experience.

APPENDIX

The more important translations from the German in the order of their first appearance:-

1752 C.F. Gellert The History of the Swedish Countess of G.
1761 S. Gessner The Death of Abel
1762 S. Gessner Rural Poems
1762 S. Gessner Select Poems
1763 F.G. Klopstock The Messiah
1763 F.G. Klopstock Death of Adam
1764 C.M. Wieland The Trial of Abraham
1765 J.J. Winckelmann Reflections on the Painting....
1765 G.F. Meier The Merry Philosopher
1766 J.J. Winckelmann Reflections concerning the Imitation.....
1767 J.J. Bodmer Noah
1767 J.G. Pfeil Memoir of Count P.
1768 S. Gessner Daphnis
1771 J.G. Zimmermann Essay on National Pride
1771 J.J. Winckelmann Destruction of Herculaneum
1771 C.M. Wieland Socrates out of his senses
1773 C.M. Wieland Reason triumphant over Fancy
1773 C.M. Wieland History of Agathon
1773 G.E. Lessing Fables
1775 C.M. Wieland Dialogues from the German
1776 S. LaRoche Lady Sophia Sternheim
1776 S. Gessner New Idylles
1779 J.W. Goethe Sorrows of Werter
1781 J.H. Campe Robinson the Younger
1781 G.E. Lessing Nathan the Wise
1786 A. Beuvius Henrietta of Gerstenfeld
1786 G.E. Lessing The Disbanded Officer
1787 C. Riesbeck Travels through Germany
1788 J.K. Lavater Aphorisms on Man
1790 J.C. Brandes The German Hotel
1791 J.G. Zimmermann Solitude
1791 J.K.A. Musæus Popular Tales from the German
1791 G.E. Lessing Nathan the Wise
1792 F. Schiller The Robbers
1792 J.W. Goethe The Sister
1793 J.W. Goethe Iphigenia in Tauris
1794 C.M. Wieland Dialogues of the Gods
1794 B. Naubert Herman of Unna
1794 K.F. Kahlert The Necromancer
1795 F. Schiller Cabal and Love
1795 F. Schiller The Ghost Seer
1795 C.M. Wieland Sympathy of Souls
1795 J.C. Lavater Secret Journal of a Self Observer
1796 K. Grosse Horrid Mysteries
1796 K. Grosse The Dagger
1796 F. Schiller Fiesco
1796 G. Bürger Lenora translations
1796 F.L. Stolberg Travels
1796 A. Kotzebue Negro Slaves
1797 F. Schiller The Minister
1798 F. Schiller Don Carlos

1798 A. Kotzebue The Stranger
1798 A. Kotzebue Lovers' Vows
1798 A. Kotzebue Count Benyowski
1798 A. Kotzebue Ildegerte Queen of Norway
1798 C.M. Wieland Oberon
1798 J. Unzer The Inquisitor
1798 J.W. Goethe Stella
1798 S. Gessner Idyls or Pastoral Poems
1798 J.W. Goethe Clavigo
1799 J.W. Goethe Goetz of Berlichingen
1799 A. Kotzebue, Pizarro
1801 J.W. Goethe, Herman and Dorothea

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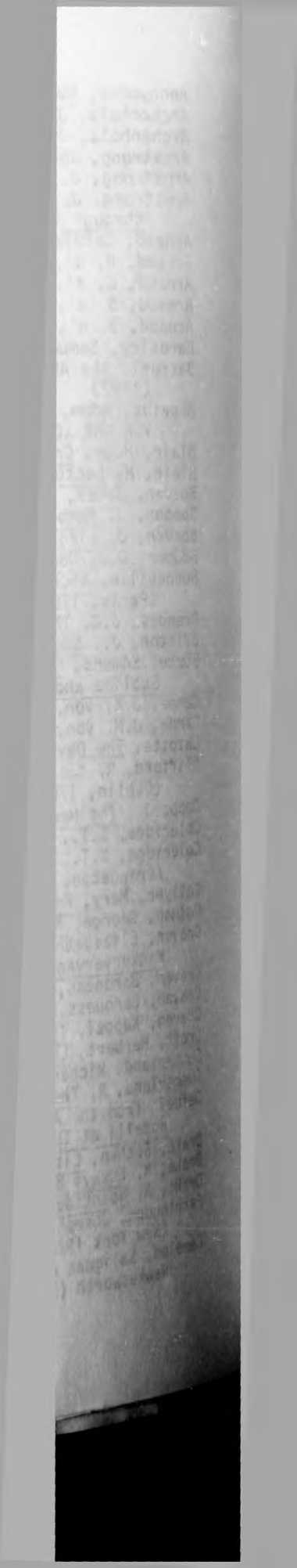

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